

**BUILDING ALLIANCES: THE TRANSFORMATION
OF CHURCHES AND COMMUNITIES**

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ABSTRACT

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The focus for this research in ministry was to determine whether divided and isolated small inner-city churches could bond together to practice effective community ministry. To achieve this goal, an alliance was formed and participants were engaged in unified multi-denominational and multi-cultural ministries such as prayer services, social gatherings and worship services. Together the practicing churches took the presence of God into the community in the form of practical ministry: cleanup, Vacation Bible School, and worship service in a city park. The findings indicate that the participants

from the alliance churches were bonded by the process and that meaningful unified community ministry took place.

INTRODUCTION

The continued rise in crime and drug related violence in inner-city communities was the motivation for this present study. Many churches, being small and isolated, find it difficult to meet the challenge of communities with high crime rates and drugs. History recounts many successful partnerships for effective ministry, yet there is division. This writer recognized the problem of pronounced division and isolation existing among the churches in the city of York, Pennsylvania and the lack of effective ministry to thwart the violence and crime. This study seeks to unify these churches, creating opportunities for spiritual initiation and renewal and by practicing ministry together with the surrounding communities.

The intent of this study was to determine varying spiritual or non-spiritual aspects of the bonding or unifying process between churches and if these aspects cause a change in the way they think of other churches. Furthermore, will this unification prove helpful in practicing effective community ministry?

The significance of this study stems from within this writer's own context, Bible Tabernacle Church whose vision statement echoes Luke 14:23, "And the Lord said unto the servants, go out into the highways and the hedges and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled." And so our vision and mission is to do what the Lord says; to reach out to this community and to the uttermost parts of the world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ." Even though this was declared, they had not until this point reached out in

this manner to their neighbors across the street nor the nearby crime and drug ridden neighborhoods. Frugal attempts were made from time to time to include the neighborhood i.e. invites to vacation bible school, the establishment of a Youth Drop-in Center, and an outdoor prayer service. However, there has been no established plan for outreach and evangelism and poor attendance in terms of volunteers to do the actual work at these initiatives. This writer attempted to help bring focus and action to the vision of this context. Original investigation into the surrounding community revealed many small churches in the area which fostered this writer's belief that together these churches could effectively change the community.

Chapter one of this document discusses the issues of the demographic area in which the context is located and then addresses the context in the larger perspective. Considering the number of churches within this particular context, the author will further discuss the coming together of these churches as a strong force to combat these issues.

Chapter two explores the literature that is currently written regarding partnerships and the formation of ecumenicals and how they affect community ministry. The World Council of Churches (WCC), as well as other models of ministry will be presented and discussed in this chapter.

Chapter three examines the theological, biblical and historical aspects of "oneness" or unity of the church and the implications that these aspects have on present day relationships between churches and consequential community ministry.

Chapter four presents the methodology and the design of the model used for this paper. It will specify the origin of the project, the entities involved and the types of research methodologies chosen for this study.

Chapter five divulges what happened during the actual implementation of the given model, the data collection methods used, and an analysis of this data. Some of the results of the model will be also be revealed.

Chapter six summarizes the total project, modifications put into operation during the implementation of the project and implications for future research.

CHAPTER ONE

MINISTRY FOCUS

The specific problem being investigated is the lack of involvement of the many churches within a three block radius of this writer's context, Bible Tabernacle Church in southeast York, Pennsylvania. In this area there are at least twelve small churches, yet there is a lack of church involvement in the community. The population in this community is mostly Hispanic and African American. This is a low-income area with low cost of living and a mix of labor and service jobs. There are a few small businesses, some of which are failing. There is a mixture of home owners and renters south of the area in which the project took place. The census for 2002 reveals that the median income for the zip code in which the churches are located climbed to \$35, 192. However this is not indicative of the area in which this project took place.

The increasing crime and violence in this section of the city has mostly centered on drugs. Organized groups in the city undertook various strategies such as prayer walks and prayer vigils, to reduce the visible drug selling and violence that occurs in this area. Yet this area remains an eyesore. It is the belief of this writer and some city officials that the churches should become involved with the community to effect change. It is this writer's concern that there has been very little or no relationship between the churches, as well as no joint efforts to evangelize or promote community ministry. God appears to be

at work in the churches but there appears to be too little of an outward expression of God's love for mankind in the midst of all their suffering (trials and tribulations).

This writer firmly believes that churches together should take the presence of God into the community and seek to minister to the needs of the community, thereby empowering the community dwellers to become productive members. The relationship that is established may or may not draw others into a relationship with God and on the other hand it may strengthen others in their quest to follow Christ. However, Christ's prayer for the church in John 17 is that we become one. This prayer for those who believe in Him through the message we give promises transformation. To see God's hand in the transformation of the communities in the city with all its diversities, we must be able to reach beyond the racial and denominational barriers to demonstrate the biblical unity.

This writer's motivation for embarking on this project stems simply from a life of prayer that asked God to be different, not to be a clone, but one who could be used to effectively touch the lives of the people. It is through this acceptance of being different that this writer embarked upon this project where few, in this city, have dared to travel. This writer has a strong desire to love the rejected, to embrace the different, and to be loved- for it is the call of God.

As a young girl, this writer always felt a difference within. In addition to feeling alone and on the outside of the world looking in, this writer felt like the "black sheep of the family", and made an effort to hide from a world that was not accepting. When this writer's mother died at an early age, empty feelings of abandonment surfaced while lying across the grave crying, "Why did you leave me here all by myself?" From that day it

was recognized that God was the answer to that constant prayer to love and be loved. His message must be shared.

This writer held on to the prayer and to God-who now became the adopted Mother. Through the many transitions in life, God was found to be a sole supporter and in His presence was peace and caring. This writer found a secret place, not far from home, a quiet place, where this writer would go to listen and to talk to God.

After responding to the call to salvation and the call to preach, the realization that this writer was different became obvious. This writer immediately got involved with a hunger to win souls for the kingdom of God. Seeing people set free and acknowledging God's grace in their lives brought the greatest joy.

Spirit-Led unified community ministry is the area of concern for this writer because too many churches are idle or going it alone when the communities while neighborhoods of the city are dying. Dr. Marva Mitchell suggests, "Let's put aside our doctrinal differences and selfish schemes and agree that Jesus is the answer. The village is dying while we are debating. We spend too much time tearing each other apart when we should be putting the village back together. Our strength is our unity, and it is the passion of the Lord that we be one".¹ Likewise we must be willing to revise our opinions, convictions and traditions, surrendering to the leadership of the Spirit and thereby allowing the will of God to be performed among men.

This writer's desire was to serve in an effective ministry, changing the attitudes of people towards God. When led by the Spirit of the Lord to Bible Tabernacle Church, this writer identified with the vision of the church to establish a ministry that would preach

¹ Marva Mitchell, *It Takes a Church To Raise a Village* (Shippensburg, PA: Treasure House, Destiny Image Publishers, Inc., 2001), xxv.

the Word of God and make winning souls a priority. Not long after joining this congregation, this writer recognized a need to strengthen the evangelism ministry. Although outreach ministries had been organized prior to this writer's arrival, they were not operational at the time. An outreach ministry was formed that visited hospitals, nursing homes and private residences to minister to the needs of the people. However, none of these ministries focused on meeting the needs of the immediate surrounding community. A survey from *Studying Congregations*, ed. by Ammerman, Carroll, Dudley and McKinney,² was given to four of the then seven leaders of the church. The survey revealed that the leaders felt the needs of the congregation and the community around the church should be undertaken as the basis for church planning.

The issues that inner city communities face, especially in the context of this model are not unique, but in ways seem so devastating. The city is small and at one time was very close knit. Everyone knew almost everyone or at least someone in the family. Now many outsiders have come with more drugs and violence. More of the young people are engaging in drug related activities and are being killed. The well known families in this area are being affected by this issue. These well known families that have established integrity throughout three to four generations find their children and grandchildren joining in with the unlawful outsiders. The church families are fighting losing battles as their children also become victims of the increasing sexual, criminal and violent drug related behaviors. After a number of years and many efforts to turn this problem around, it is very obvious that something different needs to happen. One thing that was not occurring was the combined efforts of the churches to make an impact in their

² Nancy T. Ammerman, Jackson W. Carroll, Carl S. Dudley, and William McKinney, editors, *Studying Congregations* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1998).

surrounding communities. It is this lack of oneness that allows this problem to continue to exist and to increase in magnitude.

This writer then questions why churches in this area are not taking an active part in trying to solve this problem. How many churches are there in this area of the city and particularly, how many churches are located in the problem communities? How many of these churches have a relationship with each other? How can they get to know one another? Are the different denominations willing to worship and work together in the community? How can the churches in this area become more involved in the community? The answer to these questions was the undertaking of this writer and the reason for this project.

This writer placed great importance on the answers to these questions because of the experience of going alone into the problem community and inviting the neighbors to outdoor prayer meetings, health fairs and church services. It was difficult to recruit other church members to become involved. Interestingly enough, the church in which this writer serves teaches its members about the importance of missions, yet the idea of that did not transfer in reaching out to the surrounding community. The church seems to focus more on teaching and having programs within the four walls. Therefore, this writer believes that in gathering more people in the church and combining churches together in relationship, a more effective effort can be made to touch the lives of the neighbors that surround the churches. The congregations will be drawn together in relationship by the love of God and the community will experience the love of God by the ministry outreach in their community.

Context

The context in which this writer serves is Bible Tabernacle Christian and Missionary Alliance Church, which is located in the Southeast part of the city of York, Pennsylvania. It is one of ten churches within the three-block radius of this area of town. These churches include three Spanish Churches, AME Zion, Full Gospel Baptist, Church of God, Christian and Missionary Alliance, Church of God in Christ, a Christian Ministries church and a Mennonite Church. It is these churches and the surrounding communities that designate the context for this project.

In the community around Bible Tabernacle Church, there is a high African American and Hispanic population. There are quite a few small businesses, some of which are failing. To the right of the church there is a mixture of homeowners and renters. According to the 2000-04 Percept Group, Inc., the current year population for the zip code area in which the church is located is 42, 957 of which 71.3% are Anglo, 15.3 % African American, 10.1% Hispanic/Latino, 1.4 % Asian and 2.0% Native American/Other. Over time and projected percentages has shown a decrease in the number of Anglos in this area. The statistics define Hispanics and Latinos as the fastest growing Racial/Ethnic group, 32% of households with no faith involvement, the average age is 38.4, average household income \$54, 567, 42% are single parent households, and 22% of the households have college graduates. Generational facts recorded the Millennials (born 1982 to 2001) and the Survivors (born 1961 to 1881) as the largest age groups as 30% and 27% consecutively.³ The censuses further states that 37% profess to strong faith involvement with 80 % of the population having a preference for “Historic

³ Percepts Group, Inc. *Ten Basic Facts* [database on-line] (Ranch Santa Margarita, CA: Percept Group, Inc., 2004); available from <http://www.link2lead.com/L2L/My Community>.

Christian” Tradition.⁴ Additional statistical evidence accounts for 32% of the community as unchurched or no faith involvement and of this percentage there are very few if none who have communicated with the church. These statistics however are not indicative of the area in which this project took place. This is a low-income area with low-living cost and a mix of labor and service jobs. This three-block radius is considered a high crime and drug area. Even though various strategies have been implemented to reduce the visible drug selling and violence that occurs in the area, this area remains an eyesore. It is the belief of this writer and some city officials that the churches should be more involved with the members of the community.

The churches in the area do not portray the diversity that exists there. All the churches except one are pretty much segregated with Hispanic churches clearly divided from the rest. There is a great mixture of denominations and unfortunately a hesitancy or unwillingness to worship together. Hispanic churches feel the language issue is a barrier too big to overcome. While there are churches in this community that sporadically reach out in their own way, effective change has not occurred because of the lack of a concerted ministry in touching the lives of the people in this community by meeting the needs, listening and understanding what the needs are and including the community in meeting those needs.

⁴ Ibid.

CHAPTER TWO

THE STATE OF THE ART IN THIS MINISTRY MODEL

The review of the literature points to many efforts made to unify the recognizable attitudes springing from the desire to heal the divisions in the body of Christ. What is taking place in countless inner city churches and congregations across the country is a redesign of the pattern for “oneness”. The pattern is not a new one: its structure was drawn from (John 17:21, Acts 2:44-46, Acts 4:32, and Acts 5:12-16). The Hebrew for “one” according to the Hebrew –Greek Key Word Bible Study Bible states: (1) union, unitedness (2) together, altogether, alike. There are two meanings for “one” in the Greek translations: (1) *sumpsuchos*- joined together in soul or sentiment, unanimous. It signifies community of life and love. Soulful or driven by one’s natural instinct and (2) *phreno*- the actions of the will and affections-one in not only thought but also the affections, will or moral consideration.

Reclaiming the past to design a new future brings with it a certain amount of responsibility to respond physically and emotionally. It has not been easy but there are a growing number of co-laborers demonstrating God’s love in some of the most challenging communities throughout the country. Part of this demonstration is the fact that when White Anglican congregations are fewer in number or move to the suburbs it forces churches to use the same space and experience fellowship services and ministries

together. In cases like this and the ever emerging experiences, the common spiritual encounter creates oneness in God.

Literature reveals the formation of partnerships, coalitions and alliances or ecumenical groupings. In the book Michael Kinnaman and Thomas F. Best edited, Noel Davis wrote: Fr Tillard said (quoted by Cardinal Suenens) “our primary ecumenical approach must be our common spiritual encounter and its goal our doxology.”¹

*Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on the earth, even in him: In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being preordained according to the purpose of him who worketh after the council of his own will: That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. (Ephesians 1:9-12)*²

This writer believes spirituality is a way of being for those who know Christ. A believer's ways are Christ's ways. Our common spiritual encounter then is that together the people of God exhibit the way of God to the praise of his glory. Noel Davies defines spirituality as “that gift of God through God's spirit that enables us to perceive the wholeness of all things being gathered up into a unity in Christ.”³ He further believes that uniting churches are called to authentic spirituality with the focus on Christ. These uniting churches become anticipatory fellowships through new forms and patterns of worships. This involves local ecumenical projects where two or more churches work together as if they are well on their way to full union: Partnerships between black-led and

¹Noel Davies, “Church Union Negotiations and Shared Spirituality Among Uniting and United Churches”, *United Churches and the Ecumenical Movement: Called To Be One In Christ*, ed. Michael Kinnamon and Thomas F. Best, Faith and Order Paper No. 127 WCC 1985, 15-23.

²Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture references are taken from the Hebrew-Greek Key Word Study Bible, King James Version, 1991 by AMG International, Inc. USA

³Davies, *Called to be one in Christ*, 15-23.

white-led churches to combat racial tension and economic and social deprivation; New partnerships between women and men where men and women are equal to respond with equal fullness to God's call to ministry; Charismatic renewal and the search for new and transforming relationships with Christians of different traditions; Consensus and renewal of Eucharistic fellowship as a focus of the church's growth towards unity.

For the most part, religious leaders and church organizations agree upon the idea of the church uniting and becoming one, but there are differences in how to deal with the diversity. The main issues that still cause division in the churches surrounds communion, male vs. female leadership and infant baptism.

In spite of the aforementioned divisions, many churches today are finding ways or common grounds to partner in alliance with communities such as the Northeast area of York, Pennsylvania. Six churches (four different denominations) in this area formed the "Northeast Congregational Alliance" collaborating with numerous agencies and businesses. This alliance adopted the "Shalom Plan" which involves churches and communities working together to rebuild and renew community life. This is a program based on mission evangelism by the local churches, asset-based planning and systemic change of the relationship between the churches and the neighborhoods.

John Perkins, founder of Christian Community Development Association (CCDA), who started three church-based ministries in Mississippi and California communities called together a group of leaders across America who were like minded in expressing the love of Christ to the nation's poor communities. This organization has grown from thirty-seven founding organizations to three hundred churches and ministries and three thousand individuals in thirty five states. His vision of "Doing It Together and

Doing it Right” is instantly recognizable with the idea of the “oneness” and doing effective ministry. This association is engaged in activities from evangelism to housing, from creating jobs to working with the youth. John Perkins writes, “The desperate problems in America’s inner city will not be resolved without strong commitment and risky behavior action on the part of ordinary Christians with heroic faith.”⁴

Lutheran churches formed city wide cooperative ministries that dealt with non-congregational ministries. These ministries were approved and financially supported by the judicatories and churchwide offices. The general principle for organizing the cooperative was either, “we do it together what none of us can do alone” or ‘as Lutherans we need to build strength upon strength to have a voice in changing society.’⁵ One very effective ministry that stemmed from the organized cooperatives was the Sandtown Project:

The Sandtown, Maryland Project, constructed by five Episcopal congregations laboring together partnered in ministry with Newborn Apostolic Church of the Trinity. This project birthed forth the Sandtown Habitat for Humanity and New Song Family Health Center as a result of God’s compassion and concern for the whole person and total community. The Learning Center was established in 1991 in response to the needs of the neighbors who desired improved education for their children. Also established was the New Song Academy, a non-public middle school that provides educational enrichment and assistance for the Sandtown children and youth. More than 100 children are involved

⁴John Perkins, ed. *Restoring At-Risk Communities: Doing It Together and Doing It Right* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1995), 17.

⁵Harvey S. Peters, Jr. “The Lutheran Church and Urban Ministry in North America: An Overview” in *The Experience of Hope, Mission and Ministry in Changing Urban Communities*, ed. Wayne Stumme (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1991), 28.

in pre-school and after school programs as well as summer educational camp and scholarship programs. The Learning Center Choir, Voices of Hope, recorded their first CD. The Sandtown Voices of Unity Choir, which this writer had the privilege to hear in person, has released another CD which is on the charts at the time of this writing. EDEN Jobs (Economic Development Employment Network) is a job development and placement program organized for the unemployed in Sandtown. Mark Gornick wrote about this project, "What a great privilege and opportunity from the Lord to seek the shalom of the city in new ways and in new doings, by God's grace, we will continue to move from resurrection to reconciliation."⁶

The importance of this project was the fact that it focused on the immediate needs of the community and together the churches successfully fulfilled those needs. Gilson Waldkoenig suggests that churches together have a better perspective than one that's doing it alone. He states, "Cooperatives provide a bird's eye perspective on community needs that would otherwise escape the notice of isolated congregations and a cooperative community can define area needs more effectively than individual congregations or even community services in some cases."⁷ Though there has been a coming together of the churches successfully meeting community needs, this writer feels that it is equally important to empower the community dwellers to help rebuild their own communities and make them safe. Waldkoenig addresses this issue and further states, "An important

⁶Mark Gornick, "Between Resurrection and Reconciliation: The Story of New Song Community Church," in *Planting and Growing Urban Churches: From Dream to Reality*, ed. Harvies M. Conn (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1997), 243.

⁷Gilson A.C. Waldkoenig, and William O. Avery, *Cooperating Congregations: Portraits of Mission Strategies* (Bethesda, MD: An Alban Institute Publication, 1999), 190.

sign of vitality in cooperatives we studied is that they empower community people beyond the congregations.”⁸

According to Greg Van Dunk, “When we cultivate a spirit of partnership with other congregations and individuals, we find abundant resources available for Christian missions”.⁹ This writer, serving in a financially limited context, firmly believes that like churches together can pool resources, financial and otherwise, and make effective changes in a community. Understanding the demographics and culture are vitally important in changing communities. Finding the culture, referring to the lifestyle and mindset of a community, will only come from knocking on the doors in the community or attending their community meetings and listening to their voice. Rick Warren, pastor of a very successful purpose driven ministry in Saddleback Valley, Orange County, California, suggests, “Take your own survey. Ask them what *they* feel are their greatest needs. Listen for their hurts, interests, and fears. No book or demographic report can replace actually talking with the people in your community. Statistics paint only a part of the picture. You must personally spend time with people getting a feel for your community through one-on-one interaction. I believe there is no substitute for this.”¹⁰ This writer concurs that effective change can then occur giving the community dwellers a sense of unitedness and empowerment with those who are there to help. Warren has proven one of his five point strategies that churches can grow larger through evangelism by hearing and meeting the needs of the people who live there.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Greg Van Dunk, *Let The Glory of the Lord Rise Among Us: Growing A Church in the Heart of the City* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2002), 76-77.

¹⁰Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church: Growth Without Compromising Your Message & Mission* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995), 166.

Ester Bruland, an educator of Philosophy and Religious Studies has written numerous articles and co-authored several books. Her view is that God is in the process of regathering. She believes reconciliation is a process of healing and divisions creating understanding and restoring fellowship. Her book, *Regathering*, speaks of the church going from “they” to “we”. In this reading these words were spoken by a Roman Catholic woman deeply committed to spreading the good news of Jesus, “As Christians we have this common mission to take our faith to others hampered because of divisions. People see our divisions and think we are hypocrites. The mission of the churches hindered by our failure to respect realities: if we don’t work together to make disciples, others will do it wrong –ex. Johnstown Massacre.”¹¹ God is regathering, healing and restoring so the world will see unity and not division thereby receiving the glory and drawing others to the faith.

Harding Meyer, a retired research professor and director of the Institute of Ecumenical Research in Stroudsburg, France, speaks of the concept of “visible unity” and further deals with the problem of “unity and diversity” in the traditional understanding of unity. From the beginning Christians have faced the problem of basic resolution of an Apostolic Council (Acts 15) that asked the question how to differentiate between the essential and non-essential. His view is that in this idea Christian freedom reigns and diversity is not allowed to dissolve the community. This distinction provides understanding as “unity in diversity”.¹²

¹¹Ester Byle Bruland, *Regathering the Church from “They” to “We”* (Grand Rapids, MI: Williams B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995), 54.

¹²Gunther Gassmann and Harding Meyer, *The Unity of the Church: Requirements and Structures* (Stuttgart, Federal Republic of Germany: Published on behalf of the Lutheran World Federation, Geneva, Switzerland by Kreuz Verlag E. Breitsohl, 1983).

The problem of “unity and diversity” has raised the question of uniformity in observing ceremonies, service, etc. and the distinction between essential and non-essential. Meyer believes that unity of the church is “God’s gift”-an ecumenical indicative- from which ecumenical endeavors arise and makes it possible and sustains it. According to Meyer, unity of the church must become visible, an ecumenical imperative which sets the aim of the ecumenical effort.¹³ There are new ecumenical designs developing, not unity in spite of diversity but unity through diversity. Church fellowship (Koinona), the Conciliar Process and Cooperative Federal Model present the idea that visible unity preserves the independence and identity of the different churches.

Mitzi J. Buddie, Head Librarian and Professor at Virginia Theological Seminary, Alexandria, Virginia, addresses the issues and opportunities surrounding theological understandings. The ecumenical movement deepens the theological understanding of the laity moving from the contrast of the laity being unordained Christians to expressing the privilege of the whole church being involved in Christ’s ministry to the world.¹⁴

In *Ecumenical Trends*, Sept. 2003 Clint Le Bruyns wrote concerning the issue of communion. The Eucharist celebration has been a problem since the beginning of the ecumenical movement. The Roman Catholic Church has long opposed the idea of Eucharistic hospitality (or sharing). The Pope has stated that the Eucharistic celebration cannot be a starting point for communion. It poses a significant ecumenical dilemma on the matter of ecumenical communion from the Roman Catholic vantage point. Roman

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Mitzi J. Buddie, “Lutheran - Roman Catholic Convergence on the Theology and Ministry of the Laity,” *Ecumenical Trends*, no. 32 (Garrison, NY: Graymoor Ecumenical and Inter-religious Institute, September 2003), 113-119.

Catholicism primary belief for celebrating Eucharist differs from Protestant traditions. Therefore, the Roman Catholic Church feels that these beliefs are non-negotiable foundations for intercommunion.¹⁵ This writer believes that unity should not be sought for unity's sake, which is a false movement towards conciliation, but the common ground must be recognized and acted upon to fulfill God's plan to gather together in one all things in Christ to the praise of His glory.

This discussion then leads this writer to the fact that the role of churches making a breakthrough into community involvement is not a new story. One movement for the unity of churches that effectively changed communities was that which was established by the World Council of Churches (WCC) in the early 1900's. The history of this organization will be discussed more in depth in chapter three. It must be noted that today's modern day movement can be traced back to the beginnings of this organization. Although the Roman Catholic Church, mentioned in the previous paragraph, is not a member of WCC it works closely with them and sends delegates to their conferences and meetings. They appoint representatives to the Faith and Order Commission and cooperate with WCC in preparing resource materials for local parishes during the annual Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

The WCC's contributions to unifying churches and communities span a broad sphere of interest: Nurturing the fellowship of churches, speaking out against violence and injustice, division and racism, telling the ecumenical story, promoting solidarity with churches and communities in conflict and war-ex. Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Israel and Palestine (EAPPI), encourages churches to cooperate in

¹⁵Clint Le Bruyns, "Ecclesia de eucharistia: on its ecumenical import," *Ecumenical Trends*, no. 32 (Garrison, NY: Graymoor Ecumenical and Inter-religious Institute, September 2003), 120-125.

ecumenical leaders male and female alike, educationally and experientially. The WCC is also launching; (DOV) Decade to Overcome Violence where they strive together to overcome the spirit, logic and practice of violence; Dialogue with Neighbors of Other Religions, seeking to convergence, confronting common problems and addressing difficult questions surrounding reconciliation and peace making. Another special program is a focus on Africa ecumenical HIV/AIDS initiative.

Although there are many successful partnerships for effective ministry, WCC is the most comprehensive, addresses global ecumenical issues and acts as a manager for cohesiveness of the movement. This updated information and much more can be found on the internet site: <http://wcc-coe.org/wcc/who/service-e.html>.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

Biblical Foundations

That they all may be one; just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that the world may believe that you have sent me. (John 17:21)

There are numerous scriptures in the Bible that addresses the idea of *oneness* and the need for the church to be unified. Jesus' prayer for the disciples and for those who come to believe in Him was "that they may be one" (John 17:21). Jesus prays that those who come to believe in Him will share the same identity of community as those who brought them to faith. Jesus' prayer for the universal church is that believers may be indwelt by the Father and the Son and express their unity and love, thus fulfilling its mission of leading the world to believe. The practice of believers uniting to accomplish a purpose and to add to the church daily is a biblical principle for ministry.

It has already been established that the definition for "one" includes unitedness, altogether, and community of life and love. This is comparable to the biblical message found in the Old Testament as well as in the New Testament. The word "people" is used over fifteen times in the Old Testament and refers to the "people of God," or Israel, as the chosen people of God. In Genesis, Abraham is called and God promises to make him the father of a great people and through him all nations would be blessed. The Bible records the births of sons, increasing in numbers, becoming the people of Israel. These united

people took possession of Canaan and established their home there, with each tribe assigned to their own territory. The twelve tribes of the one people were both unified and diverse. They lived their lives in basic units as the family and the village, bound together by local agriculture or other common concerns. The larger body, the tribe, came together to provide a militia in the times of danger.

Also in the Old Testament is the story of Nehemiah. Nehemiah was concerned that the Lord's name was not being esteemed as it should have been because His city, Jerusalem was in ruins. With God's help, he planned and supervised the rebuilding of the wall around Jerusalem. He inspired the spirit of cooperation and unity among the people. Nehemiah said to them, "You see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lieth waste, and the gates thereof are burned with fire: Come, and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach." (Nehemiah 2:17) Then he told them that God was with him and the King had offered his help. The people then said to Nehemiah, "Let us rise up and build. So they strengthened their hands for this good work." (Nehemiah 2:18).

Nehemiah's ability to recruit the support of so many groups to rebuild the wall sends a message of not only unity or oneness but also of reconciliation and healing throughout the land.

The New Testament documents the Christians acting in accordance with the "oneness" of the church. The Gospel of Luke, the Book of Acts and the Roman Epistles, gives much attention to the unity of the church. The Apostle Paul in his writings encouraged the New Testament Christians to be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind in order to shine like stars in a perverse generation.

The message he gave is consistent with Jesus' high priestly prayer that the oneness of the believers would serve as a witness to the world. In the book of Acts we have the true model of the Christian church and the means of propagating the truth.

Acts 1-2 – One Accord, One Place and Filled With the Holy Ghost

The disciples all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus and with his brothers on the Day of Pentecost, they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, Peter preached a powerful message and that day about three thousand persons were added to the church.

Acts 2:46, 47- The Early Church Brought God Glory

The believers continued daily with one accord in the temple and breaking bread from house to house, eating their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

Acts 4 – Prayers Answered, Power to Preach, Grace given and No Lack

The people of God lifted their voices with one accord, prayed and asked God for boldness to speak the word. They asked for the stretching forth of God's hand to heal and to let signs and wonders be done by the same of Jesus. The place was shaken and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and spoke the word boldly and the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one soul and had all things in common. Great power was given to the apostles' witness of the resurrection of Jesus. Great grace was upon them all and there was no lack.

Acts 5- The Powerful Early Church

By the hands of the apostle's were many signs and wonders wrought among the people (and they were all of one accord in Solomon's porch). Believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women. Multitudes out of the cities around Jerusalem brought sick folks, vexed folks, folks with unclean spirits and they were all healed.

One thing that this writer found very interesting was the story of the Apostle Paul's collection for the church of Jerusalem. The story is recorded in II Corinthians where Paul instructed the churches concerning the true Christian ministry (3:1-6, 18). He taught the grace of giving and gave instructions concerning collections for the poor saints in Jerusalem. Paul indicates in II Corinthians 9, 10 that God is the one who gives all things, and since we cannot exist without God, God has a right to say how it is to be dispersed. It is also God who increases the fruit of righteousness and blesses the sower and the increase of the gospel. Dieter Georgi, discussed several issues concerning the collection for Jerusalem; (1) He believes that in the case of II Corinthians 8 and 9 the rendering service was in terms of stewardship and ministry, "The notion that sender, envoy, and recipient are bound together, united in one and the same fateful mission, is not lost. The principles of representation, vicarious action, reciprocity, and shared destiny are tightly connected to the collection for Jerusalem and its conveyance."¹ (2) The action of grace attributed to the Macedonians, who though poor and persecuted, rejoiced at the opportunity of doing good to the more impoverished and persecuted churches in Jerusalem. Georgi discusses how this grace, manifested again and again, would touch the

¹Dieter Georgi, *Remembering the Poor: The History of Paul's Collection for Jerusalem* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1992), 81- 82.

Corinthians as well. According to Georgi, Paul cannot write about the collection as if he is ordering them to do it, he states, “All he can do is stress the enthusiasm of the Macedonian congregation, knowing that this comparison would put Corinth to the test and probe the authenticity of their love.”² The churches were reminded not only of their giving but also of their sharing in the benefits. Paul’s purpose then was to evoke voluntary action and to grant understanding of the importance of one’s own free will.

(3) Georgi mentions that simple kindness causes thankfulness to God through the sender.

The Hellenistic idea presented by the author describes thanksgiving as light rising upward, increasing God’s splendor and grace. Georgi describes the content of this thanksgiving in the following statement: “The financial donations made by the Pauline congregations are meant to remedy an economic neediness on the part of the Jesus congregation at Jerusalem, a fact Paul makes quite clear. But the distribution of the collection is also meant to produce abundance in the wake of the great number of thanksgiving prayers that will follow.”³ Georgi suggests that the abundance of the thanksgiving prayers will glorify God, shed light on the grace of God and the position of God would be made more secure. He further suggests that this praise and worship, the space in which it happens, and where salvation comes to pass, the body of Christ and its atmosphere, will accumulate abundance on God’s behalf. Georgi stresses Paul’s concern for the unity of the Body of Christ and his understanding of what money could do to increase the number of believers.⁴ Although matters did not turn out as expected, the

²Ibid., 82, 83.

³Ibid., 103.

⁴Ibid.

importance of this collection was viewed in Paul's ministry to the Gentile community and his connection to the Jewish believers in Jerusalem.

Should not the church then use the model of the early church to come together on one accord, to pray for and receive power and grace to convey the Good News? These examples from scripture presents a clear a call from God to the Body of Christ to come together as one, to gather resources and to distribute them among the needy, therefore glorifying God and causing an increase in the kingdom of God.

Historical Foundation

In the beginning there were a few Christians. You may ask, "How many are a few?" The starting number is taken from Acts 1:14-15 that suggests there are one hundred and twenty Christians. Later accounts claimed 5,000 believers and many more thousands through the next six decades. Stark argues that numbers are not absolute because this was probably a period of miraculous-seeming growth. This writer found it interesting that in Starks discussion about the number of Christians in Rome, he felt that the conversion proportion should have been larger. He first stated that historians assumed the church in Rome was especially strong because it was known for sending funds to Christians elsewhere based on the letter Dionysius of Corinth wrote to the Roman church, "From the start it has been your custom to treat all Christians with unfailing kindness, and to send contributions to many churches in every city, sometimes alleviating the distress of those in need, sometimes providing for your brothers in the mines".⁵ This thought is what the Apostle Paul had in mind, that through giving and by doing ministry among

⁵Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity: A Sociologist Reconsiders History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 9.

them, others would see the power and glory of God and be converted. Stark discusses how a “few” Christians through community and relationships caused a great increase of believers in only three centuries. Stark felt the early church abounded, “because Christianity was a mass movement, rooted in a highly committed rank and file, it had the advantage of the best of marketing techniques: person-to-person influence.”⁶ His continuing premise concerning the growth of Christianity is, “the primary growing numbers of Christian believers, who invited their friends, relatives and neighbors to share the “good news.”⁷

Historically, the church rarely enjoyed the idea of unity and more rarely than not has been involved not in unity with diversity but in division. Early in the church there were major divisions over the doctrine of the Trinity, Christology and other theological factors. Through the centuries splits rose between Orthodox and Oriental churches, and Eastern and Western Churches divided. Martin Luther protested against the church at Rome and later other reformers like the Swiss theologian Ulrich Zwingli and the French John Calvin appeared. Later centuries revealed additional splits in the church, “We must face the facts. The church is divided and a diverse Christianity is weakened. To say that Jesus Christ rules in His church today is a cunning device of shifting the blame of sin division from our own shoulders to Christ, and so not infrequently we hear arguments justifying decision on the ground that it is the providence of a wise heavenly father and

⁶Ibid., 208.

⁷Ibid., 208.

all that these divisions stand for definite truth. Such arguments find their analogy in those erstwhile arguments in support of human slavery, polygamy, etc.”⁸

While Christians may have affirmed that the church is one, history and present actuality plainly discloses that Christians were divided. They not only lived and worshipped in isolation from one another but also had serious disagreements and even hatred. This contradiction was thought to be a scandal. Barnhouse in agreement with Swiss theologian Karl Barth wrote, “The problem of the lack of oneness is the greatest problem in Christendom today. Beyond question, the church is divided and, in the clear light of scripture, such a condition is scandalous.”⁹

This view caused Christians from every denomination and continent to commit to do something about this scandal. These efforts came to be known as the ecumenical movement.

Ecumenical History

Prior to the Ecumenical Movement, towards the end of the nineteenth century was the influence of the Revivalism that made possible the foundation of the Universal Evangelical Alliance (1847), the Young Men’s Christian Association (1898), the Young Women’s Christian Association (1898), and the World’s Student Christian Federation (1895). The main stages of the ecumenical movement began with World Council of Churches (WCC) in 1948.

⁸Peter Ainslie, *If Not A United Church, What?* (New York, NY: Revell Co., 1920), 72-73.

⁹Donald Grey Barnhouse, *We Are One Body in Christ* (Philadelphia, PA: The Evangelical Foundation, Inc, 1957), 9.

Council on the one hand can refer to the governing body of a particular denomination or community (and at least to some extent, undivided churches which spoke on matters of faith and practice). On the other hand, the term is also used in reference to associations or fellowships of still divided churches. Historically, the church has been divided and unified because of doctrine, theology and related practices. The WCC encourages churches to address these issues as well as social and other issues relative to unity. Kessler and Kinnamon provide an overall view of the WCC: "The WCC is defined in its basis as a 'fellowship of churches' whose first purpose is "to call the churches to the goal of visible unity". Councils, that is to say, are not simply instruments for cooperative service and evangelism but fellowships through which the churches seek to grow in deeper unity with one another. The key figure in early years of WCC was William Visser't Hooft, General Secretary of the World Council of Churches from its birth until his retirement in 1966. Visser't Hooft wrote in his memoirs-"No one knows the number of number of local council of churches, but numbers are in the tens of thousands."¹⁰

Today, WCC brings together more than three hundred and forty churches, denominations and church fellowships in more than a hundred countries and represents over four hundred million Christians. Even though the European and North American churches founded the WCC, today most of the churches are in Africa, Asia Latin America, the Middle East, the Pacific and the Caribbean. This has created a worldwide ecumenical network allowing member churches to share an enormous amount of theological, spiritual, material and human resources.

¹⁰Diane Kessler and Michael Kinnamon, *Council of Churches and the Ecumenical Vision* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2000), 15.

History provides information concerning the Roman Catholics involvement with many ecumenical movements as well as a working relationship with the WCC. The many church traditions work together in the WCC's Faith and Order Commission which produced a statement on baptism, Eucharist and ministry that has led to new patterns of worship within churches and has led to a greater understanding and changed relationships between churches.

WCC has established the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity when Christians are drawn together into the Lord's prayer that all may be one so that the world may believe. Also, WCC's involvement in the struggle for justice, peace and creation has produced the Programme to Combat Racism which supports the struggle against apartheid in South Africa, the civil conflict in Sudan, the reunification of North and South Korea, and the defense of human rights in Latin America.

A hallmark of this ecumenical movement has been the importance of inter-religious dialogue and relations with other faiths. Historic tensions and differences may still exist but the ecumenical movement and the WCC continues to change to meet the needs of the ever emerging issues such as young people finding their own expressions within the church and ecumenical movement.

Many churches today are a part of local Council of Churches as a means of becoming involved in the community, such as the York County Council of Churches. This council claims no affiliation to the PA Council of Churches, the National Council of Churches or the World Council of Churches. Yet in 1951, fifty four local congregations found it fitting to form a cooperative agency of Christian Churches in York County, PA. This agency would show forth the mission desired by the member congregations and

involved many non-profit human service agencies in York. The issues addressed and subsequent programs convey and witness to the idea of unity as portrayed by the WCC, except on a local level.

Former generations of small church leaders have found ways for their congregations to work together in ministry and worship. Carl S. Dudley explores the changes and components of small churches and unity over the last two decades. His study of FACT research data concerning cooperative parish ministries reveals the happenings “where people of God in different congregations within a given geographic area find a means of ministry to all people and all the needs of the people within the area.”¹¹ Further discussion on this report ultimately brings the reader to the conclusion that across the nation, churches found common grounds to worship and to do ministry. Today, according to Dudley, many different strategies for “adding to the church daily” have taken on many forms that reflect cultural, religious and congregational resources differences.

The Role of Women in the Growth of the Church

Female leadership in Greek, Roman, and Jesus societies remind us that women exercised leadership behaviors and responsibilities in spite of structures of oppression, silence, and seclusion. Women were not trained or educated and their roles were clearly defined as child bearers, home keepers and perhaps someone’s property, due largely to the patriarchal society of the time. Stark embarks on this issue in four different areas. First he discusses the surplus of females in the Christian world while the pagan world boasted of more males. This shift was due to the Christian belief that infanticide and

¹¹Carl S. Dudley, *Effective Small Churches in the Twenty-first Century* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2003), 184 -185.

abortion were prohibited for Christians. Secondly, Stark agreed with the theory that linked to sex ratios, Christian women enjoyed a higher status in the Christian world than women in the pagan in the world at large. Thirdly, a great number of Christian women were marrying pagan men (exogamous marriages), thus an influx of secondary converts. Finally, the increased number of children born to the multitude of Christian women added to the church. Stark argues that, “superior fertility contributed to the rise of Christianity.”¹²

Vashti M. McKenzie, the first female Bishop in the A.M.E. church, traced the role of women from biblical times to the present day. Women have transitioned through periods of being the silent wife working at home to women who challenged the male dominance and superiority, Hellenistic Greek women who were depicted as goddesses or priestesses, women of power who conducted business, Roman women under control of the “paterfamilias” who had an official role in religion but was excluded from official offices, Jewish women who were introduced as the “helpmeet” in Genesis 2:20. In spite of societal limitations women emerged throughout the history of the church who had important roles in religious life. Bishop McKenzie feels that the role of women in the religious arena has been marginalized and must be reclaimed in order to move forward. In her study of women in ministry, particularly African American women, McKenzie found that today numerous women are in leadership positions but still face limitations and doors that are shut for no other reasons than racism and sexism. McKenzie’s challenge to men and women alike is to “lay down their swords to push the gospel plow

¹²Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity: A Socialist Reconsiders History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 128.

together.”¹³ She further persuades the reader, “Only the committed and continued strength of both genders, serving with each other and not pitted against each other, will propel us towards a biblical egalitarianism.”

Therefore, the struggle still exists, and the church remains divided concerning the female role in religion. There are women who forge ahead regardless of the opposition but there are many more operating from the margins, who may not survive the limitations and shut doors. In agreement with Bishop McKenzie, this writer believes the issue of sexism must be resolved in order to fulfill God’s purpose.

Rosalie G. Reigle presents memoirs about Dorothy Day, a woman who co-founded the *Catholic Worker* newspaper in New York City in 1933 and a radical pacifist that fostered a movement using Christian principles to bear on social and economical injustices. Her co-laborer, Peter Maurin, a French peasant, schooled her on the social teachings of the church and presented to her a plan for informed social criticism, houses of hospitality for the homeless, and communal farms where the unemployed could learn a skill. The portraits of her tell a story of a woman who lived and worked and was deeply committed to radical nonviolence with the daily practice of hospitality. She was deeply religious but her church did not know what to do with her. They basically left her alone as the movement began to expand to other inner cities and embraced by other groups, including main-stream churches. Reigle stated, “Many lay religious communities and Christian peace groups throughout the world are pointing out the connections between war and poverty and working to eliminate them. They hear the message of Dorothy Day, her faithfulness to God, who lives in the poor and disfranchised, her radical opposition to

¹³ Vashti M. McKenzie, *Not Without a Struggle: Leadership Development For African American Women in Ministry* (Cleveland, OH: United Church Press, 1996), 118.

the materialism of contemporary life, the clear connections she drew between her spiritual life and her nonviolence".¹⁴ At the time of Dorothy's death there were 80 houses, but today there are approximately 180 Catholic Worker houses including four different countries. The gospel is lived out in many diverse ways but the Catholic workers are united in their efforts of peace making and fighting poverty. The Catholic Church now wants to canonize her and make her an official saint of the church.

Another woman who forged ahead despite the opposition was Dorothy I. Height. During the years of the Civil Rights Movement she was the only woman in the decision making councils. She has spent over ninety years fighting racial and social injustice. Dr. Height was at the forefront of three national women's organization; the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) in 1937 as assistant executive director committed to equality and the struggle to translate principles into practice; the National Council of Negro Women where her dedication to Mary McLeod Bethune began in the late 1930's until now as she serves as the president. In Dr. Height's own words, "The National Council of Negro Women today embraces 38 national organizations and 250 community-based sections. All told, the NCNW has a worldwide outreach to more than 4,000,000 women. As an "umbrella" group, the council encompasses many distinct and diverse purposes. But always, it is committed to women of African descent and their families and communities. It's great strength has been that it builds leadership skills in women by emphasizing self-reliance, unity and the commitment to work collaboratively";¹⁵ Delta Sigma Theta Sorority as a founder in 1913 and as a president. This organization founded

¹⁴Rosalie G. Reigle, *Dorothy Day* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2003), 8.

¹⁵Dorothy Height, *Open Wide the Freedom Gate: A Memoir* (New York, NY: Public Affairs, 2003), 271.

on Christian principles is a network of sisters seeking to be of service to others. One of Height's first works was the Job Opportunity Project which fought for equal exposure of African American women to job opportunities. Today this organization provides services through Habitat for Humanities, AIDS initiative programs, education (Delta Academies), social justice projects and many more avenues.¹⁶

During a telephone conversation with Dr. Height in June, 2004, this writer learned that Dr. Height was receiving the Congressional Medal of Honor for her work in July of 2004. This award was additional to the Presidential Medal of Freedom, Citizens Medal Award and the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Freedom Medal.

Religious History of the City of York, Pennsylvania

The history of this city reveals the beginnings were engrossed in witchcraft. The inhabitants believed in "white magic"- when spells and rituals were performed for the good. They also believed in "black magic", when evil spells (commonly called a hex) and incantations were cast to harm or kill others. From the late 1800's to the early 1900's, Pow-Wows were widely used. Pow-Wows were gatherings where "white magic" was practiced and people would be healed from their ailments. People attended these Pow-Wows from York and two other surrounding cities. The city of York accommodated one of the important leaders of this movement, who was eventually murdered supposedly because a "hex" or curse was put on him. This was very interesting to find out since the united prayer of the city churches has been against this spirit of violence and murder that prevails in a magnanimous way to this day.

¹⁶ Ibid.

The hex symbol (of German origin) used by this group is still visibly seen throughout the tri-city area and may denote that the spirit is alive and well. This writer believes this is a root cause of division.

The history of this city also records Klu Klux Klan organization and activity. This author writer knows an individual who received the hate phone calls and mail and ultimately the burning cross on the lawn. This occurred in the 1980's. The years 2001 and 2002 found York City on the national news regarding conflict with a national white supremacy group. One of the leaders of this group was born and raised in this area and was determined to bring his hate message here. Originally, he was able to use the city library for the first meeting. This caused dissention and near riots from opposing sides. When he tried to set up another meeting he experienced opposition from city officials. Before the issues were resolved he was incarcerated somewhere else. This city is still divided concerning this issue.

Many of the churches in this city are segregated with one percent or less integration in most White or African American churches. The past few years have shown some increase with the influx of more contemporary churches being established and the organization of community evangelistic events. It should be noted that the Bible Baptists churches for many years sent buses into the inner city communities. They gathered children from all races to attend Sunday school and youth programs. The parents of the children seldom, if ever, attended or became members of these congregations.

As one can envision, the race barrier is truly a social and spiritual stronghold in this city. The aforementioned York County Council of Churches (YCCC) in this city functions as a vehicle through which Christian-based ministries may help meet the needs

of the communities. To my knowledge, not many if any, African Americans churches in the city have been involved in this organization. Here to date, African Americans formed their own group, the Black Minister's Association, of which this writer is a participant. Unfortunately, the gross divisions still remain even in this small sector. While they might fellowship together from time to time, it is very difficult to plan, organize and carry out ministry as "one". In the confines of this ministerial, race as well as all the other issues remains.

This writer had the occasion to meet with the newly appointed director of YCCC. As a pastor of a local Moravian Church, while this writer was creating this project, he helped to organize an alliance of eight churches (4 or 5 different denominations) in the Northeast section of York City. This pastor was very supportive of this writer's interest in building an alliance in the Southeast portion of the city. He shared that on occasion they had worshipped together but their most recent project included an outdoor Vacation Bible School. This project involved all the various denominations and a very denominationally diverse audience. He expressed that race was a barrier they had not been able to successfully cross and suggested that this writer see what could be done in that area when forming this new alliance.

Theological Foundations

There should be unity in the church because there is one body and one spirit just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to you all.
(Ephesians 4:4, 13)

Scriptures are abundant in sustaining the concept of unity in the early church, breaking down walls between Jews and Gentiles. The oneness or unity of the church derives from its one Lord, Jesus, the Savior of all nations. The one Christ is present in

every local community of faith. Jesus' final words turn the church over to God. This prayer found in John 17:1-26 commonly called "the high priestly prayer", models how the church is to understand and receive its identity in the world.

This community is invited to become one with the Father and Jesus, therefore the future of the church rests with God instead of themselves. This prayer is the theological vision that lies at the heart of the life of faith. Jesus hands those He loves back to God and holds God to the promises for the church.

Jesus prayed for those who took on the work of God in the world. Jesus also prayed for those who come to believe that work. Jesus expressed a desire that the world will come to share in the knowledge of God that marks the life of the faith community. In this prayer the world is not portrayed as hating the church but as receiving the community's witness.

Jesus' core prayer for the unity of the church is "that they may be one". Jesus prays that those who come to believe in Him will share the same identity as those who brought them to faith.

The unity for which Jesus prays is not just for the sake of the church itself, but derives from the unity of the Father and Son. For the church to be one means they mirror the Father/Son relationship. Bernard Thorogood expresses this by saying, "This unity will be more than mirroring- the church will experience oneness because they share in the mutuality and reciprocity of the Father/Son differences. It has to be so plain in the way

we order our common life in Christ that the world can see a people brought together before the cross.”¹⁷

Unity in encountering the living presence of the risen savior in a Eucharistic fellowship draws the members into communion with the Holy Ghost and makes them children of God. This establishes spirituality in the midst of the pursuit for unity.

Koinonia

The World Council of Churches’ Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Program and the Faith and Order Movement have been having important dialogue about the term, Koinonia, and the conciliar process.

Koinonia is a term pointing to our belonging to one another as Christians and as churches. This term has more recently been used to express the commitment to unity. Theologians are questioning the relationship between this and the ecclesiological and ethics within the commitment to justice, peace and integrity of creation process.

According to Anna Marie Aagaard’s research, “Every confessional and theological tradition has a language and a structure of decision-making which is used when a church is challenged fundamentally with regard to its faith and its credibility. Research reveals, however, that every attempt to subsume these various models under one model has been shut down.”¹⁸

The Vancouver Assembly in 1983 of the World Council of Churches, Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation program and the Faith and Order movement was described

¹⁷Bernard Thorogood, *One Wind, Many Flames: Church Unity and the Diversity of the Churches* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1991), 70.

¹⁸Anna Marie Aagaard, “Churches Committed to Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation”, *Koinonia and Justice, Peace and Creation: Costly Unity*, ed. Thomas F. Best and Wesley Granberg-Michaelson (Ronde, Denmark, 1993), 10-11.

as a conciliar process of mutual commitment. The term *conciliar* means from, or by means of a council. The united churches response to congregations who choose not to unite is to leave the door open for bridge building, the sharing of information, opportunities to work together and pray for each other. Its intention has been to call the churches to commitment and coordinated action in response to injustices and threats to survival in the world and taking actions together nurtures the reality of unity, fellowship and koinonia.

Some theologians believe koinonia is not to be established because it already exists. It is the idea of people actually participating and becoming what they are. Theologian, Ioan Sauca, believes “every human being, created in God’s image, is a relational entity and, consciously or unconsciously, longs for communion with God, and with others and with the whole creation.”¹⁹

Ioan Sauca further discussed koinonia orthodoxia (right faith) and described it as communion in one faith and the one, undivided church. According to Sauca, the Faith and Order movement made efforts towards one faith (apostolic) churches in the ecumenical movement. He writes, “Through ‘conciliar fellowship’ it is bringing churches together in their common search to rediscover their unity in one faith.”²⁰

We learn in our Christian walk, faith must be accompanied by action. Therefore, koinonia orthopraxis must be included in this discussion of right faith with a visible

¹⁹Ioan Sauca, “Growing Together into Full Koinonia- Orthodox Considerations”, *Koinonia and Justice, Peace and Creation: Costly Unity*, ed. Thomas F. Best and Wesley Granberg-Michaelson (Ronde, Denmark, 1993), 63-69.

²⁰Ibid.

expression. This writer feels both orthodoxia and orthopraxia must be in operation to reach koinonia.

As said by Sauca, the rediscovery of full koinonia of Christian churches should include the following criteria; (1) Faithfulness to the living Word in Christ (2) Courage to witness orthodoxia and orthopraxia (3) Repentance, forgiveness, faith and action: (a) for not obeying God's Word and acting on it, (b) for failing to witness God's Word about faith and action through our daily lives, and (c) for wounds we have caused fellow Christians in the division and brokenness.

In agreement with some theologians, this writer also desires for all Christian churches to reach full koinonia. In other words, to practice what is believed and preached.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

A qualitative study was undertaken to investigate the hypothesis that small inner-city churches could unite and become one in their evangelistic efforts by practicing spirit-led ministry together in the surrounding communities. There would be a transformation of the way churches do ministry and the community dwellers would experience the presence of God at work in their community. The uniting or bonding would happen as the congregations would gather together for fellowship, prayer, worship, and community ministry.

The design of the project was to form an alliance of the small inner city churches and partner with community agencies within the southeast area of York, PA and to carry out a community ministry project as *one*. First, Rev. David Danneberger, Executive Director of the York County Council of Churches, was consulted because of his leadership role in the newly organized North East Neighborhood Congregational Alliance. Pastors of churches in the southeast area and community representatives from the community agencies were contacted. All were asked to attend a meeting to hear the vision and be informed of the project.

The churches and agencies that committed to such an undertaking encompassed Bible Tabernacle Christian and Missionary Alliance Church, Small Memorial African Methodist (AME) Zion Church, Eagle Christian Ministries, J.L. Williams Memorial

Church, Sojourner Ministries, Community Progress Council (CPC), York City Housing Development and South George St. Community Partnership, Inc.

After the alliance was formed and named the Southeast Community Alliance (SCA), the purposes stated for the alliance included: to unite as “One” to do effective ministry in the Southeast community of York: to be One in God and Jesus so the community may believe in a living Jesus: to reflect the Presence of God in the community: to transform our community to authentic Christian discipleship. The SCA felt these purposes could be accomplished through the churches in the community by forming an alliance and partnering with agencies and businesses in the same area and by fellowshiping together while planning and combining efforts in executing community ministries.

The SCA designated included approximately a four block radius: Market St, east from George to Broad streets; George St. south from Market St. to Springettsbury Ave.; Springettsbury Av. East from So. George to Edgar streets; Edgar St. north to Boundary Ave. connecting Broad St. to E. Market St. (includes Hannah Penn Middle School and the Cable House).

The congregants and community members were encouraged to participate in an “Action Plan” consisting of united prayer services and a social gathering at member churches and culminating in a ministry project in the community (Maple Street Park Project). Announcements during services, Sunday Bulletin notices and fliers distributed in the community, prompted involvement in the project.

A map of the churches and the designated area, notes and agenda from the first two meetings, a statement of purpose and participants can be found in Appendix A.

Context Associates which consisted of Pastors and some leaders who assisted in planning the events and services and writing the questionnaire were participant/observers throughout the entire process. Other Context Associates, especially the community agency representatives, attended some meetings, requested updates, participated in the events or helped as needed. The Context Associates were: Rev. Carl Scott, Bible Tabernacle Church: Rev. Dean Landis and Gaye Makrias, Eagle Christian Ministries: Rev. Kenneth Newman, Small Memorial A.M.E. Zion: Rev. Paul Zeigler, J.L. Williams Memorial Church: Pastor Bob and Susan Mattern, Sojourners Ministry: Mr. George Moore, Community Progress Council: Mrs. Kim Brown, Director of York City Housing Development: Ms. Cheryl Rascoe, South George St. Community Partnership, Inc.

Professional Associates, consulted in the organizational stages of the alliance, provided insight into the diverse cultural issues, helped with contacts and suggested spiritual initiatives and effective strategies in implementing community involvement. Included in this group were: Rev. Nathaniel Johnson, Mt. Moriah Baptist Church: Dr. Sharon O'Malley, York City School District: Dr. Julia Harris, retired York City School District Assistant Superintendent.

Intervention

This project created opportunities for alliance members to fellowship for the sake of bonding. The participants experienced together: prayer services at three different churches, an event called "The Gathering" which was an informal social event to meet others involved in the alliance and to be informed of ministry opportunities within the community. The ministry within the community centered-around an area

where houses were torn down and a park had been constructed by Eagle Christian Ministries, one of the churches in the alliance.

Prayer Services

The prayer meetings allotted time to the sharing of the SCA vision by the Pastors or Context Associates, prayer for the city, prayer for the Southeast Community Alliance designated area (surrounding community and dwellers) and prayer for the pastors and churches that were not yet a part of the alliance. A bonding tool used during prayer time at one of the churches was a song entitled “I Need You”:

I need you, you need me;
 We're all a part of God's body
 Stand with me, agree with me,
 We're all a part of God's body-
 It is His will that every need be supplied-
 You are important to me, I need you to survive.
 I pray for you, you pray for me, I love you-
 I need you to survive,
 I won't harm you with words from my mouth-
 I love you, I need you to survive.
 It is His will that every need be supplied-
 You are important to me,
 I need you to survive.
 I love you, I need you to survive.¹

This song was used during the praise and worship time before the prayer and ended the prayer as well. The Minister of Music from Bible Tabernacle led the praise and worship service at ECM and taught the song to the participants who then sang the song to each other.

There were three prayer services, one a month for three consecutive months. The first one was not surveyed but names were taken because of a prophetic word given about

¹Hezekiah Walker and the Love Fellowship Choir, *Family Affair II: I Need You*, Indianapolis, IN: Verity Records, 12.

the alliance being the new beginning (new history) for the city of York. This meeting was actually the first meeting of the combined churches in which the primary researcher and the Context Associates shared the vision of the alliance and the community. Participants signed an attendance sheet as a record of the attendees to the first combined prayer meeting of the alliance. These participants then e-mailed their responses to this ministry experience. See Appendix B for the attendance and responses of the first prayer experience and photos of a consequent prayer experience.

The Gathering- A Social Event

“The Gathering” included a “get to know you and what church you belong to” type activity. Those who attended randomly sat a table with members from other churches. This was done for bonding and networking purposes as well. Display tables were organized by churches to share information about their ministries. Creative displays included pamphlets, photos, poster board information, video clips, etc.

Community leaders were invited to attend this gathering to share information about their organization and ways that the alliance could get involved. These were: Officer Eugene Fells from the York City Police Department, who was recruiting as well as informing us of the neighborhood watch program and of neighborhood outposts being established. Also present was Ms. Sharon Ritter of the York 21st Century Youth Achievement Program that consist of community agency sponsored clubs and activities available to middle school students as an after school program. Ms. Jana Murray, Assistant Director of the Parent Center made a presentation, asked for volunteers and/or participants. Kim Brown from York City Housing Development and George Moore from Community Progress Council were not present but sent information to be distributed.

Both agencies offered assistance in meeting the needs of the alliance. See Appendix C for examples of the type of information displayed by churches and community agencies.

The Maple Street Project

Cleanup and Prayer

The context associates and the youth ministries from alliance churches and other interested congregants signed up to work on the Maple Street park project. Community Service workers were also assigned to be involved. Neighborhood children and adults were encouraged to offer assistance in the cleanup and to participate in the prayer for the community and its inhabitants. Every weekend for two months, those assigned to the park, cleaned the park and completed any work that needed to be done. Many times workers were able to minister to community members as they hung out their windows, came to their doors or walked by the park.

Following the cleanup and prayer, the feedback given on a survey by all the assigned workers provided the researcher with information concerning whether bonding was taking place between the members of the various ministries.

Vacation Bible School

After the two months of park cleanup and prayer, the planning for a joint Vacation Bible School began. This was the last phase of the project. Context Associates and lay –volunteers from five different ministries met to design the week-long activities. The agenda for the Vacation Bible School activities can be found in Appendix D.

On Saturday morning, volunteers met to canvas the communities surrounding the park, passing out fliers for the cookout and service that evening. All ministries participated in supplying food, cooks and servers for the cookout. The service included: a singing group from a new ministry in the area called *Set Free Ministry* (designed to help men recovering from drugs and alcohol and other dependencies), a Praise and Worship Team (singers) from Bible Tabernacle Church, brief words from Pastors Carl Scott, Kenneth Newman and Pastor Bob Mattern, a call for individual and community prayer, and a prayer and presentation of the free bookbags led by Pastor Dean Landis. An interpreter was entreated to translate for the many Hispanic families in this particular neighborhood.

All gatherings at the Maple St. Park included context associates, youth ministries, other congregants interested in working in the community and community members –(i.e. agency representatives and neighborhood dwellers).

See Appendix D to view photos of the above-mentioned events.

Measurement

The data in the project was obtained by using these methods- survey questionnaires, audio taped group interview, letters and e-mail documents and photographic materials. The end questionnaire was the evaluation/observation of the alliance members and their experience with the spirit of God in “oneness” and how it affected their united evangelistic ministry to the surrounding community. The sources used as guides to formulate questionnaires, conduct interviews, collect e-mail and found

documents were: John W. Creswell, *Research Design*², William R. Myers, *Research in Ministry*³, Floyd J. Fowler, Jr., *Survey Research Methods*⁴, and Seymour and Norman M. Bradburn, *Asking Questions: A Practical Guide to Questionnaire Design*⁵.

Surveys were completed and collected after each event: two prayer meetings, “The Gathering” social event, each Maple Street Park clean-up day and Vacation Bible School including the worship service. The testing group was the members of the alliance churches who attended each event. The group varied from one event to another but participants were encouraged to commit to attend all gatherings, including signing up for at least four weekends over a two month span, to help with park cleanup and community ministry. The Context Associates were participant /observers and were a part of the group surveyed. Participants selected to write letters, e-mail responses and the audio taped group interview were selected for their attendance to three or more of the combined events; prayer meetings, “The Gathering” social event and the park project. This was determined by names recorded on sign-in or sign-up sheets.

The Ministry Survey

The Context Associates met to discuss the type of questionnaire needed to convey the bonding process (transformation) of uniting with other churches through prayer, socializing and ministry to the community. The prayer meetings and social gatherings

²John W. Creswell, *Research Design*, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2003).

³William R. Myers, *Research in Ministry*, 3rd ed. (Chicago, IL: Exploration Press, 2000).

⁴Floyd J. Fowler Jr., *Survey Research Methods*, 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2002).

⁵Seymore Sudman and Norman M. Bradburn, *Asking Questions: A Practical Guide to Questionnaire Design* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Inc., Publishers, 1982).

were for experiencing the presence of God together and then together the study group would work in the community. All three issues were evaluated to gain insight into their experience with the Spirit of God in “oneness” and how it affected their united evangelistic ministry to the surrounding community. The Context Associates accepted or revised questions suggested by the researcher and agreed upon additional questions by those in attendance. Taken into consideration was Floyd Fowler’s suggestion, “to ask questions about which the respondents will answer with the abstract concepts embedded in the study objective or goals.”⁶ After viewing the purposes of the alliance the following questions were devised for the ministry survey:

“How was this experience relevant to the ‘oneness’ of Jesus’ High Priestly prayer in John 17:21?”

“What do you think was the main point of this experience?”

“How was the point of this experience made clear to you?”

“My feelings about the experience today were (circle one):”

Leader Presentation: Very Good Good Average Poor Very Poor

Interaction with Others: Very Good Good Average Poor Very Poor

Prayer time: Very Good Good Average Poor Very Poor

“What in this experience caught your attention or engaged you in a significant way?”

“How did the interactive activities help you to understand the project?”

“How was this experience relevant to you? To the alliance?”

“How were you motivated by this experience to take some action towards community ministry?”

An additional survey was formulated in like manner and given to the study group after Vacation Bible School and the Worship Service on the park. This survey measured the varying degrees of how the respondent experienced God’s presence while participating in the ministry project. The response ranking scale was: 1=none, 3=somewhat, 5=transforming. The categories for this survey were:

1. This project affected your thoughts about other churches

⁶Floyd J. Fowler Jr., *Survey Research Methods*, 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2002), 106.

2. The presence of God was reflected in the community
3. We have reached out to families outside of the church
4. Explanations or comments about any of the above:

See Appendix E for a copy of the documents.

Validity of data is established if the conclusions from multiple methods are the same. When multiple methods are involved, it is called methodological triangulation.⁷ In this study, in addition to surveys, an audio group interview, photographs and other document analysis was used to assess the changes.

Journal entries written by the researcher early in the study followed the format given by William Myers in his book, *Research in Ministry*. Myers contends, “A D. Min researcher values the subjective data generated within the researchers through the process of ministry. A journal often is used to “catch” this data. Entries are discipline in form, open in style. The possibility of comparing entries in such a journal over time makes them particularly relevant to the ministerial process and also to D. Min research.”⁸ An example of a journal entry is:

Journal entry #2- January 3, 2004. Yesterday at 4:00 p.m. I met with the context associates to finalize plans for “The Gathering” next Friday. The meeting went quite well. Jana joined us for the first time to help plan the event. She is from Bible Tabernacle Church and is the Assistant Director of the Parent Center in the City of York. She will help with treats for Friday, coordinate icebreaker games and make a presentation for the Parent Center. Pastor Bob and the Prayer Director of Eagle Christian ministries asked to meet with me to develop a prayer plan/purpose.

⁷Lisa A. Guion, *Triangulation: Establishing the Validity of Qualitative Studies*, Publication FCS6014 of the Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences, Florida Cooperative Extensive Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, September 2002.

⁸William R. Myers, *Research in Ministry*, 3rd ed. (Chicago, IL: Exploration Press, 2002), 65.

The taped group interview was held at Bible Tabernacle Christian and Missionary Alliance Church in the sanctuary. This interview was conducted in accordance with John W. Creswell's statement "In interviews, the researcher conducts face-to-face interviews with participants, interviews participants by telephone, or engages in focus group interviews with six to eight interviewers in each group. These interviews involve unstructured and generally open-ended questions that are few in number and intended to elicit views and options from the participants." The criteria for the interview consisted of the study participants who attended three or more events and representative of the alliance churches. See Appendix F for a transcribed interview from Daisy Woodard from Small Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church.

Documents such as e-mail letters, photographs and newspaper articles were collected to support the data that emerged from the surveys and interviews. William Myers expresses that documents are often used to challenge or compliment emerging themes from other forms of data, and declares, "documents add a certain authenticity."⁹

⁹Ibid., 47.

CHAPTER FIVE

FIELD EXPERIENCE

The participants attended prayer services, a social event, park-clean up and a week long vacation Bible school that concluded with a service on the park. Data was collected from a ministry survey after each event. A one-group recorded interview was given after three bonding experiences. Data was also collected from the social experience such as church and community information and sign-up sheets that were in direct response to the purpose of the ministry experience. An additional survey collected after the service on the park was completed to correlate the responses.

Results and Analysis

The “Ministry Survey” was collected immediately after each ministry experience. Responses were recorded and evaluated subjectively. After reading the responses a general sense of what the participants were saying was obtained and thoughts about the data were recorded. Each ministry experience was evaluated to determine its significance in the bonding process and its motivation towards united community ministry.

Questions 1, 4, 5 and 8 were found to be significant in determining the effectiveness of prayer towards the bonding and motivation process. Those questions were; (1) How is this experience relevant to the “oneness” of Jesus’ High Priestly prayer in John 17:21? (...that they may be one in us: that the world may believe that you have

sent me.)” “4. My feelings about the experience today were: Very Good, Good, Average, Poor, Very Poor:” “5. What in this experience caught your attention or engaged you in a significant way?” “8. How were you motivated by this experience to take some action towards community ministry?” These four questions replied to the overall question, “Did transformation occur in relationships among the churches and in relationships in the community?”

Prayer Ministry

The responses from the first general meeting of congregants from the various churches were very positive. The participants expressed concern for the surrounding community and their enthusiasm, excitedness, and encouragement to be involved in this project. After the second prayer experience, the “Ministry Survey” showed 87% of the participants found the prayer experience to be relevant to attaining togetherness, oneness, unity or harmony, 9% found prayer to be somewhat relevant and 4% no answer. The overall feeling about this experience in the “Very Good” category concerning leadership presentation was 83%; the interaction among the participants was 70% and the actual prayer time 97%. The interaction percentage rate may have been lower in this instance due to the fact that individuals did not interact once the prayer started. The participants felt that worship and prayer, the fellowship and partnering of the various denominations and races engaged them in a significant way and were motivated to take some action towards community ministry.

“The Gathering” - A Social Experience

The response to this experience was even more positive than the first meeting. There were 68 people in attendance representing six different churches/ministries, and several community agencies. These were people from varying denominations, races and ages. The fun activities, the desserts to eat, and the networking between the churches made a profound impact upon the unification process. The pastors of churches that decided to ally, spoke personally about the Southeast Community Alliance and their hopes for lay member involvement in the decided ministry focus as well as future missions. The individual church display tables informed the other churches of the wide variety of ministries offered by each church. The community representatives and their presentations in turn informed the churches of ways they could become effectively involved in the community. The response of this experience was very positive as participants signed up to view the signup sheets that were used for this evaluation.

Maple St. Park-Cleanup & Prayer

Each week the “Ministry Survey” was collected after the cleanup and prayer on the park. Again using answers from questions 1,2,4,5 and 8 (mentioned on page 14), it was suggested by most of the participants, that the working together or “oneness” of the various denominations and races in the community was a reflection of God that draws people to Himself. Participants also suggested that the main point of this experience was “to build relationships with one another and to bring life to their area” and “to give the people a place where they can go and be safe”. It was further suggested the interaction with others and the prayer time was a very good experience for most of the participants.

The participants felt they were engaged in a significant way by meeting the children and other people who lived in the area of the park that came out and gathered or worked with them. The motivation to be there, to pray for the community and the desire to see change indicated action steps toward current and future community ministry.

Maple Street Park – Vacation Bible School and Service

The Additional survey was used and collected after the week of Vacation Bible School and the Worship Service on that Saturday night. This culminating survey suggested that the project transformed their thoughts about other churches. One participant said, “I’m proud of having been a part of the joining of our churches. I’ve been tired of seeing churches not sharing the love of Jesus with another. This was powerful!” This survey also suggested that most participants believed that the transforming presence of God was reflected in the community. It was stated on this survey that, “The interaction and response of community was very good.” Most participants felt that reaching out to families outside the church was transforming.

Conclusion

Results of the analysis of the collected data suggest that forming an alliance and doing effective community ministry has been transforming for the churches as well as the community. Through the alliance many new ideas and fellowships were set in motion and all the involved churches have been changed to smaller and greater degrees. The participants felt reminded of the continuous need to reach out to mankind. In turn, the adults and children of the community responded by coming out of their homes and

gathering with us on the park. The results indicate that this ministry cannot end here but must continue until the drug dealers across the street from the park give their lives to God and more of the community takes ownership of keeping their neighborhood clean and safe.

CHAPTER SIX

REFLECTION, SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

And the Lord answered me, and said, 'Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it.' (Habakkuk 2:2)

It appears that many churches if not all have themes for their church based on the vision that God has given to the Shepherd of that particular flock. Sometimes these themes are scripture verses or inspirational words based on the given vision. For instance, First Assembly of God says, “Where People are Priority and Christ is Preeminent”: Fairview Full Gospel Missionary Baptist Church states, “A Church That Is Working To Change A Generation”: York Christian Fellowship reverberates, “Let us help you bring the church into your home- Through Worship, the Word, and the Work of God.” Usually these themes are accompanied by vision statements and most likely are posted weekly in the church bulletin. In this writer’s context, Bible Tabernacle Christian and Missionary Alliance Church, the theme is “We believe God.” The vision statement is this:

Build a church in the York Community where the name of the Lord Jesus Christ would be lifted up, and where sinners could come and be saved, regardless of the way they looked or dressed, regardless of their past, where they came from or what their lives may have been, no matter how much money they had or didn’t have. Whosoever will, could come and feel the presence of God and be saved. The Lord said, “Build a church where these men and women that are hanging on the street corners, strung out on drugs and/or alcohol and caught in other areas of sin could come and be leaders in the church of Jesus Christ.” The Lord said as the master said to his servants in Luke 14:23, “And the Lord said unto the servants, go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.” And so our vision and

mission is to do what the Lord says; to reach out to this community and to the uttermost parts of the world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. *The Vision is being Accomplished Through ME.*

After some years of preaching, teaching and training in this context this vision became the passion of this writer. The desire swelled to be a vehicle through which this vision could come to fruition. Thus began the pursuit of God's plan for the people of God in this context and the people of God who share the surrounding communities.

The issue focused on for this context was not that attempts to fulfill this vision weren't made through the years, but that at this point in time, no viable or effective effort was being pursued to accomplish the goal of the vision. There were active auxiliaries reaching out in various ways but this writer believes that God was now painting the bigger picture for us to see. Our surrounding communities were increasing in crimes and violence due mainly to drugs and the like. The bigger picture was all-encompassing of this context as well as the many other small churches in this area, collectively making a difference in the surrounding community. This was the crux of the study whereby to determine means of sharing God's presence as people of God and together shaping ministry strategies to affect change in our communities. It is this writer's belief that there is a world-wide move of God for churches to unite in spiritual proclamation as well as active ministry to win our communities and cities to Christ. The question that needed to be addressed is what must the leaders of this context do to move the church from internalized programming to the passion of ministering to the community? Likewise, how does this context relationally become a part of God's bigger picture or plan?

Interestingly enough, a survey received from four of the seven leaders in this writer's context suggested that the community surrounding the church was not well

informed of activities taking place in the congregation, nor was there a study of the needs of the congregation and community regularly undertaken as the basis for church planning. Furthermore, this survey showed a discrepancy in whether cooperative projects and joint worship with churches of other denominations was highly valued in the congregation of this context. This was an indication that relationship issues existed between this context and other churches in the area and with the surrounding community. For the most part, this stood true throughout the duration of the project except for an increase in the Missions Department in knocking on doors and handing out information about the church and its activities. Only a few members from this context were involved in most of the activities with the most involvement being with the outdoor vacation Bible school.

One revelation factor was the need to change the context associates. The original context associates, who were these same surveyed leaders, were not able to engage in the project in this manner due to other church and home obligations and responsibilities. However, the engagement of the pastors in the context area as context associates proved to be within God's scheme for this project. These pastors are the ones who now are challenged to take ownership of the alliance that has been formed. Verbal feedback from the context associates indicated that more of the pastors could have been more involved in the initial formation and recruiting of the alliance partners and planning. Planning and implementing this project revealed that others were likewise touched by the plight of the churches to come together and to do ministry in the community. Many of the pastors felt that their schedules were too inundating to undertake such a task and they welcomed a leader.

For the sake of bonding and experiencing the presence of God together, this writer and the context associates provided opportunities through prayer services, social gatherings and ministry to the community. Each phase involved leadership participation, interaction with other churches and prayer time. The context associates normally met once a month to plan the project experiences.

Prayer Meetings

The context associates agreed prayer was essential to the implementation of this project to seek God's will together for the alliance and the community. According to the *Ministry Survey*, eighty-six percent of the participants felt prayer meetings were relevant in creating "oneness" among the congregations and hearing the prayers of others expressing the harmony and unity. Some responses given were: "I felt the pleasure of God as we gathered and prayed for one heart"; "The oneness of the Holy Spirit was overwhelming!"; "There was such a unity at this meeting, not only in the prayers but in the fellowship"; "We as believers were here worshipping as one." The prayer meetings were focused and it was clear that a common heart for one another and the city was being developed.

Social Gatherings

"The Gathering" was specifically designed for each participant to meet and interact with others from the various churches and community agencies. The name tags, information display tables, games and strategic seating was successful in forging new relationships and an acute awareness of ministry and organizational activities in the

community. Sixty-eight congregants attended this event with a comparable number representing each ministry. The idea of the park ministry was introduced at this meeting and sign-up was encouraged for future contact. Participants were asked to write notes or e-mails concerning this event. Comments about this activity included: "It was good to see the interaction of the people and the heart for the community. We appreciated learning about the different programs that are already in place and so many great ideas."

The cookout at the culmination of the Vacation Bible School was another opportunity to fellowship with each other and the community. Many of the neighborhood children and their parents shared in a meal, games, praise service and the distribution of book bags.

The Maple Street Park Project

This experience served a dual purpose. First and foremost, people from the various churches were able to work together for a common purpose. Much sharing of ideas and more personal conversation added to the bonding process and secondly, relationships were developed with those who lived in the neighborhood. The children often came out to help clean the park and joined in the prayer time. People walking by were sometimes engaged in conversations with the participants and offered to help clean up.

The overwhelming response of the participants to this experience was: They felt this was a relevant and very good experience "of having people from other congregations working together to serve God on one accord in a community needing prayer"; "There was more than one race participating in the ministry in a neighborhood of all different

“To build relationships with one another and to bring life to this area”; “Working together as one and people seeing the love”; “To touch others with hope and that they may build their faith leading them to Jesus.”

The Vacation Bible School conducted on this park was a great tool for fostering relationships with the community dwellers and the 50-60 or more children in attendance each night, the number of parents and children who attended the cookout and the culminating service testified to this fact. Some of the responses given concerning this were: “It was awesome! Keep these types of activities going! Even the paper (York Newspaper) gave praise to this outreach!”; “This was a powerful experience in working together as the body of Christ.”

This writer believes that the intended purpose for this experience was accomplished in a small but great way and is just the beginning of building relationships with the people of God in this area and with the surrounding community.

The interesting thing about this project was that there were many models of partnerships to examine but none this writer felt led to duplicate, although one important factor was common in each model; the bringing together of those involved and the seeking of God’s will for the southeast part of the city of York. Amazingly enough, as the context associates were led and as they planned, the journey began the building of relationships and making known the presence and love of God in the community.

This project, now a ministry, has expanded with more community involvement then ever. In December, 2004 the Southeast Community Alliance sponsored a Community Holiday Celebration at Jackson Elementary School (free usage due to the fee being waived), where over eight hundred meals were served, more than one thousand two

hundred toys and three hundred bags of groceries given away and more than one hundred volunteers who came out to serve. There were eighteen community agencies and companies involved and a request from others to be involved this year. The employees of the school district in which this writer is employed were invited to donate prayer, time, toys or money. An email after the event thanking those donors stated, "This was just an awesome celebration. People came to know Jesus as Lord and Savior. God is God and through our prayers He will make a difference in the City of York."

The planning meetings, joint prayer services, prayer walks and community outreach continue. On the agenda already are plans to feed and clothe the homeless through organizations like *Our Daily Bread Soup Kitchen* and *Helping Hands*. Transportation is being organized to transport people from agencies such as *Bell Shelter* (home for the mentally and physically challenged), *Access House* (drug rehabilitation center for women) and others.

To connect and strengthen the church of York, several of the context associates and this writer recently attended *Summit for Transformation* that asked all the area pastors and leaders to be willing to lay aside differences, offenses, fears, etc. and ask the Lord Jesus Christ to establish His Kingdom here in York County as it is in Heaven. This was to begin by establishing and re-establishing God honoring relationships. This writer witnessed and participated in a day and a half of relationship building as well as being inspired by a speaker, Doug Stringer, the founder and director of Turning Point Ministries International, an evangelistic and discipleship ministry with outreaches to churches and the secular world.

Plans are being made to have combined services and ministries all over the city. Southeast Community Alliance will be a part of that bigger picture. Hopefully though, the alliance formation model will be useful to those churches that have not yet developed relationships with the other churches in their area. Some of the community outreaches may be tools that would work for them to build relationships within their surrounding community. This writer believes that if the four areas of the city are presented as a strong unit, then the church of York can be strong and effective in the transformation of the York City communities. It is the opinion of this writer that the transformation of churches and communities is a movement, no longer a vision written down, because research reveals that it is beginning to happen all over the world.

Because of this project, this writer has spent more time in the community than ever before. The movement from pulpit sitting on Sunday mornings to visiting other churches in the alliance area reflects the transformation that occurred within. Working towards the bonding of the churches through spiritual experiences and realizing the strengths of these churches in respect to community ministry has become the sole ministry of this writer. This transformation from project researcher to ministry director has also fostered the idea of weekday cell groups or churches established by this writer and others in homes or high rise apartment buildings. The participants of these groups would then be guided to the churches in the alliance area.

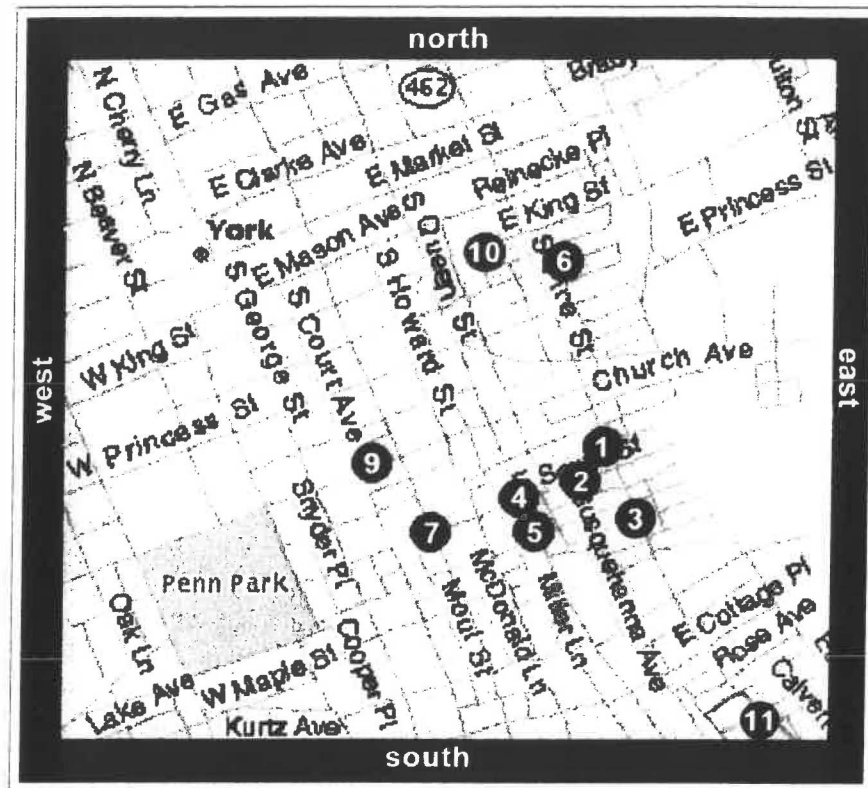
For this writer, this project has heightened the passion to see the church of York worshipping and working together to win the lost and the city to Christ.

APPENDIX A

MAP OF CHURCHES

NOTES/AGENDA FROM FIRST TWO MEETINGS

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE, PARTICIPANTS, AND DEFINED AREA



Places of Worship

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>① Bible Tabernacle Church
361 S Pine St, York, PA</p> <p>② Salvation Army Hispanic Worship
257 E South St, York, PA</p> <p>③ Fairview Full Gospel Missionary
465 S Pine St, York</p> <p>④ Small Memorial AME Church
401 S Queen St, York, PA</p> <p>⑤ Assembly of Pentecostal Church
426 S Queen St, York, PA</p> | <p>⑥ Tidings of Peace Mennonite Church
318 E Poplar St, York, PA</p> <p>⑦ Tabernacle Deliverance Church
400 S Duke St, York, PA</p> <p>⑨ House of Worship
43 E College Ave, York, PA</p> <p>⑩ Trinity United Methodist Church
241 E King St, York, PA</p> <p>⑪ Believers Fellowship
S Queen St, York, PA</p> <p>Eagle Christian Ministries
850 S Pine ST, York, PA</p> |
|--|--|

Southeast Community Alliance

NOTES FROM MEETING HELD ON SEPTEMBER 25, 2003 at BT Church

- ◊ **IN ATTENDANCE:** Bible Tabernacle Church- Pastor Scott, Small Memorial AME Zion Church - Pastor Newman, CPC- George Moore, J.L. Williams Memorial Church of the Living God
- ◊ **Suggestions made to me :** Contact Alex Ramos - Spanish Center and Kim Brown - York City Housing. Also touch bases with Pastor Dean Landis concerning the park project
- ◊ **Suggestions George Moore made:** He will contact Henrietta Cook, Linda Fabrez, Ella Ellis. Also invited all to an Open House on Oct. 23, 2003
- ◊ **All were to bring ideas and suggestions for united ministry to community**
- ◊ **All were to think about a name for this alliance**
- ◊ **These Ministries and Organizations agreed to participate in this alliance:**

Bible Tabernacle Church
 Small Memorial AME Zion
 CPC
 J.L. Williams Memorial Church of the Living God

CHURCHES AND COMMUNITY WORKING TOGETHER
Meeting at Bible Tabernacle Church - 10/30/03 at 6:00 P.M.

AGENDA

OPENING PRAYER

INTRODUCTION OF ATTENDEES

NOTES FROM LAST MEEETING

NEW INFORMATION

Kim Brown
 Alex Ramos - set date to meet with him and others
 Community Representatives

EAGLE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY - Pastor Landis

Name for Organization

New Commitments

NOTES FROM MEETING ON OCT. 30, 2003 AT BT CHURCH

ATTENDANCE:

Pastor Landis - Eagle Christian Ministries
 Gaye Makris - Eagle Christian Ministries
 Henrietta Cook - CPC
 George Moore - CPC
 Pastor Newman - Small Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church

Suggestions for Meeting with Kim Brown ;

Simon Bldg.
 Update on Housing Codes (Community - Training
 City money available for project (types of groups)
 Fire Dep't - Is effort made to let the people know what the markings are?

Try to get a meeting with Alex Ramos and Spanish pastors

Community representatives for Housing, Safety, City clean-up, Nat'l Night Out

Contact George Lankner - Salvation Army

Contact So. George Street Partnership

Gather information for Resource Booklets

Contact Tom at York Alliance

Contact Sharon Ritter - York 21st Century Youth Achievement Program

Pastor Landis talked to us about the park project
 Need to raise funds for playground equipment
 need workers to care for the park

Agenda - Nov. 20, 2003

Opening Prayer

Introduction of new attendees

Notes from last meeting

New Information

Planning for Community Event
 Pastor Newman

SOUTHEAST COMMUNITY ALLIANCE

Building Alliances: Transforming Churches and Communities

The purpose of the Southeast Community Alliance is:

- To unite as "One" to do effective ministry in the Southeast community of York
- To be One in God and Jesus so the community may believe in a living Jesus
- To reflect the Presence of God in the community
- To transform our community to authentic Christian discipleship

This can be accomplished by:

- Churches in the community forming an alliance
- Community agencies and businesses partnering with churches
- Fellowshiping together while planning special community events
- Combined efforts to plan and execute community projects

Participating churches and agencies:

- Bible Tabernacle Christian and Missionary Alliance Church
- Small Memorial African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Zion Church
- Eagle Christian Ministries
- J. L. Williams Memorial Church
- Sojourner Ministries
- Community Progress Council (CPC)
- York City Housing Development
- South George St. Community Partnership, Inc.

Southeast Community Alliance defined area is:

- Market St. east from George to Broad streets
- George St. south from Market St. to Springettsbury Ave.
- Springettsbury Ave. east from So. George to Edgar streets
- Edgar St. north to Boundary Ave. connecting Broad St. north to E. Market St.
- (includes Hannah Penn Middle School and the Cable House)

What we've done:

- United prayer services at member churches
- United social gatherings
- Maple Street Project (see attached flier)
 - Congregants from member churches met and cleaned Maple St. Park from 10 to 11 a.m. every Saturday in March and April. All united in prayer at 11 a.m. and prayed for the community / neighborhood.
 - Vacation Bible School on the park – August 2-6, 2004
 - Combined Bi-Lingual Worship Service on the park – August 7, 2004
 - Free bookbags distributed to community children (approx. 150) after the service

Planned Projects

Promoting lines of communication through actions such as prayer meetings, social gatherings, worship services and community ministry.

Future Vision:

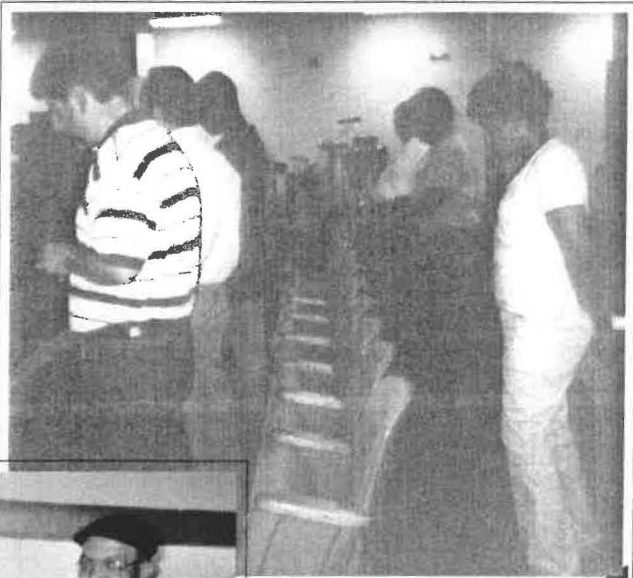
*** We invite you and your membership to help us fulfill Christ's command to us to unite as one to do effective community ministry. (John 17:21)*

APPENDIX B

PHOTOGRAPHS: ALLIANCE PASTORS

FIRST PRAYER MINISTRY EXPERIENCE

FIRST PRAYER MEETING- ATTENDANCE AND RESPONSES



THE FIRST PRAYER MEETING ATTENDANCE

Mary C Tyler 817-11294 12/10/03
 1st Alliance Prayer Meeting
 Gerald Bacon
 Pastor Bob Brown
 Sara A. Matteson Gwendolyn A. Rieker
 (Lissy L. Woodard 845-2316)
 Paul L. Lane Jr.
 John + Andrea Zeller 244-4881
 Bro. Cliff Moye
 Pastor Robert Jensen
 Alona Williams
 Rebecca Tanney
 Mae Dickerson
 Simmie Dickerson
 Carol Douglas
 Esther Gibbs
 Gaye Makris
 Jane Murray
 Kenneth Neuman Sr.
 Harold H. Payne
 Dearharts
 D

Jean Pettigrew

RESPONSE TO THE FIRST PRAYER MEETING

January 9, 2004

*To: Reverend Gwen Rankins
From: Daisy L. Woodard*

RE: Southeast Alliance

I left the meeting/prayer session held at Bible Tabernacle feeling uplifted And enthused about the different denominations, races and genders coming together to help build up the kingdom of God. The world is sitting and watching our behaviors and attitudes they know that we should be kind and compassionate. Together we can show them the love and the Christlikeness in our lives. What better way to do this then to take it to the streets and help a struggling neighborhood or a hurting boy, girl, man or woman? I tell you I am ready to pull up my sleeves and do what part I can. I was truly overjoyed to see people who live outside the city but are parishioners of a city church take a genuine concern for the needs of our community.

I am prayerful that God will bless this endeavor and we will do what is pleasing to Him. We can do a mighty work when we all work together and I believe from the short session that night the prayers were for unity. We can all learn from one another, there are many ways to worship but there is only one God to worship. I am prayerful that the Southeast Alliance Christians will work and worship Him together.

RESPONSE TO THE FIRST PRAYER MEETING

Southeast Community Alliance Prayer Meeting – December

I was excited to be a part of this, the first of meetings for the churches of our area of the York community to come together.

Over the years I have been part of York area prayer events, Jesus marches, and pastors' prayer meetings, but the Alliance prayer meeting began at a level that I had not experienced with others. There was an immediate connection with individuals from one congregation to another and an expectation was in the air.

Gwen opened the meeting introducing her self and the pastors who represented the various churches. She clearly shared her purpose, vision, and direction for the evening and future meetings. My heart was blessed as Gwen opened our time of prayer for our city in a most positive direction. Without intimidation, prayers spontaneously came forth from those present.

The prayer time concluded in a timely manner giving opportunity to share and plan for future meetings.

I am eager to see and participate in what God has for the future. Everything I have heard from my congregation has been up beat and positive.

Bob Brown, Associate Pastor
Eagle Christian Ministries

John & I both agreed that we felt the Holy Spirit was leading and that we felt the praying time + discussion time was most encouraging. God's hand is in this, and that prayer, strategy and action will see the most accomplished for His Kingdom.

John & Paula (Ann) Zellmer

APPENDIX C

“THE GATHERING”- FLIER

EXAMPLES OF CHURCH AND COMMUNITY INFORMATION

EXAMPLE OF E-MAIL RESPONSES

•

“THE GATHERING”
THE CHURCH AND COMMUNITY
GETTING TO KNOW ONE ANOTHER

Time: 7:00 P.M.

Date: JANUARY 9, 2004

Address: SMALL MEMORIAL A.M.E. ZION CHURCH
401 SOUTH QUEEN STREET



**Bible Tabernacle
Christian &
Missionary
Alliance Church**

He Believed

*Rev. Carl H. Scott,
Pastor*

*Sis. Diane A. Scott,
Partner in Ministry*

**Challenging
Youth
To Change
The World
For Christ**

Nehemiah 2:12-18

"For us shall we build?"

**Ministry of
Eagle Christian
Ministries**

850 South Pine Street
York, PA 17403
816-1060

Disciples of Youth Ministries
Gayle Makris
767-4009
Email: BabyMakris@aol.com

SMALL MEMORIAL AFRICAN
METHODIST EPISCOPAL ZION CHURCH
401 S. QUEEN ST.
YORK, PENNA.



Why a Council of Churches and what does it do?

The York County Council of Churches exists to witness to the gift of unity given through Jesus Christ.

We live into this unity

- By proclaiming the Christian gospel of grace and reconciliation.
- By celebrating the diversity among our member churches and contributions each one makes to our common witness.
- By convening member churches in dialogue around theological and social concerns.
- By addressing human needs in our larger community.

City of York PENNSYLVANIA CITY SERVICES RESOURCE GUIDE



Charles H. Roberts, Mayor



Community Progress Council Inc.

A Guide to Programs and Services

People Helping People...
since 1965

Local Board of the City of York, PA

York 21st Century Program

"MAKING THE SCHOOLS AND
COMMUNITY CENTERS AND A
SAFE HAVEN WHERE
STUDENTS, PARENTS, AND
COMMUNITY ARE ENGAGED IN
LEARNING, HAVING FUN,
AND BEING SUCCESSFUL."

Thomas H. Eiler—Program Coordinator
(717) 848-1400



YORK 21ST CENTURY YOUTH ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM SCHEDULE
EDGAR FAHS SMITH MS 2003/2004

DAY	ACTIVITY	TIME	ROOM	AGENCY
MONDAY	Martin Library/Cyber Camp	3:15-6:15	Lib/Comp Lab	Martin Library
	Girl Scouts	3:15-4:45	224	Penn Laurel Girl Scouts
	Cultural Diversity Club	3:15-4:45/4:45-6:15	220	York Spanish American Center
	York Arts	4:45-6:15	214	York Arts
	Hip-Hop Club	3:15-4:45	212	Yorktowne Dance Theatre
TUESDAY	Drama Club	4:45-6:15	Auditorium	Yorktowne Dance Theatre
	Amser-I-Can	3:15-4:45		Community Progress Council
	Martin Library/Cyber Camp	3:15-6:15	Lib/Comp Lab	Martin Library
	Boy Scouts	3:15-4:45	225	Boy Scouts
	York Arts	3:15-4:45	214	York Arts
	Girls Achieving Pure Potential (GAPP)	3:15-4:15	210	YMCA
	Girl Scouts	4:45-6:15	224	Penn Laurel Girl Scouts
	Sheriff's Mentoring Program	4:45-6:15	Gym	York County Sheriff's Dept.
	Hip-Hop Club	3:15-4:45	212	Yorktowne Dance Theatre
	Drama Club	4:45-6:15	Auditorium	Yorktowne Dance Theatre
WEDNESDAY	Amser-I-Can	3:15-4:45		Community Progress Council
	Martin Library/Cyber Camp	3:15-6:15	Lib/Comp Lab	Martin Library
	Cultural Diversity Club	3:15-4:45/4:45-6:15	220	York Spanish American Center
	Amser-I-Can	3:15-4:45		Community Progress Council
	4-H	3:15-4:45	Home Economic	Penn State Cooperative
THURSDAY	Lyring'	3:15-5:15	219	Mr. Garyl Moore
	Newspaper Club	4:15-6:15		Mr. Bryen Wade
	Martin Library/Cyber Camp	3:15-6:15	Lib/Comp Lab	Martin Library
	Group Counseling - (Asset Club)	3:15-4:30	218	Family-Child Resources
	Group Counseling - (Choices Club)	3:15-4:30	214	Family-Child Resources
	On The Move	3:15-4:15	Gym	YWCA
	4-H	3:15-4:45	Home Economic	Penn State Cooperative
	Surviving The Middle School-Parent Grp.	5:00-6:15	210	Family-Child Resources
	Cultural Diversity Club	3:15-4:45/4:45-6:15	225	York Spanish American Center
	Amser-I-Can	3:15-4:45		Community Progress Council
FRIDAY	Lyring'	3:15-5:15	219	Mr. Garyl Moore
	Newspaper Club	4:45-5:45		Mr. Bryen Wade
	SCHEDULED ACTIVITY	3:15-6:15	Gym	York 21st Century Staff
	Martin Library/Cyber Camp	3:15-6:15	Lib/Comp Lab	Martin Library
	21st Century Choir	3:15-4:45	210	
				REV. 11/19/83

Counseling Services are available every other day 3:00-6:00 through Children's Home of York



The City of York Pennsylvania

50 West King Street PO Box 509 York, PA 17405

www.yorkcity.org

Honorable John S. Bremner, Mayor

Police Department
717-846-1234

Mark L. Whitman
Police Commissioner

POLICE OFFICER APPLICATION 2004

INSTRUCTIONS: Complete both pages of this form and sign where indicated. Also, complete the APPLICANT DATA RECORD attached. Type or print all the forms in black ink, and print clearly. All forms must be legible. A non-refundable check or money order for \$50.00 (cost of test) made payable to City of York must be enclosed with this application upon submission. (Applications will not be accepted without fee)

**DEADLINE FOR COMPLETED APPLICATIONS IS January 30, 2004
12 Noon Eastern Standard Time**

RETURN COMPLETED APPLICATIONS and a CHECK OR MONEY ORDER FOR \$50.00

HAND DELIVER OR MAIL TO:

**CITY of YORK
HUMAN RESOURCES
1 MARKETWAY WEST
YORK, PA 17401-1420**

NAME _____ DATE _____
(LAST) (FIRST) (MIDDLE)

ADDRESS _____
(NUMBER) (STREET) (CITY) (STATE) (Z P)

TELEPHONE () _____ SOCIAL SECURITY NO. _____

ARE YOU A U.S. CITIZEN? _____ ARE YOU OVER AGE 20 _____

ARE YOU A VETERAN OF THE ARMED SERVICES? _____ BRANCH _____

EDUCATION (YEARS COMPLETED) _____ DIPLOMA/DEGREE _____

DRIVER'S LICENSE _____
(NUMBER) (STATE)

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN FOUND GUILTY OF A FELONY? _____

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN FOUND GUILTY OF A MISDEMEANOR? _____

YOU MUST COMPLETE BOTH PAGES OF THIS FORM

Juno e-mail for gwennear@juno.com printed on Thursday, January 22, 2004, 8:21 PM

From: BloominSuzie@aol.com
To: gwennear@juno.com
Date: Wed, 21 Jan 2004 23:36:52 EST
Subject: Friday Evening Meeting

Dear Gwen,

My wife and I attended the meeting on January 9. We were both very impressed with the willingness of the different congregation to come together for the betterment of the community. It was good to see interaction of the people and the heart for the community. We appreciated learning about the different programs that are already in place and so many great ideas. My wife especially was very excited to meet Jana Murray and hopefully her organization and the Lamb's Arms Ministry of Eagle will be able to work together to compliment each other. We are looking forward to the next meeting.

Sincerely,

Larry and Susan Bloom

APPENDIX D

MAPLE STREET PROJECT POSTER

PHOTOGRAPHS: PARK CLEANUP AND PRAYER

E-MAIL AND SCHEDULE

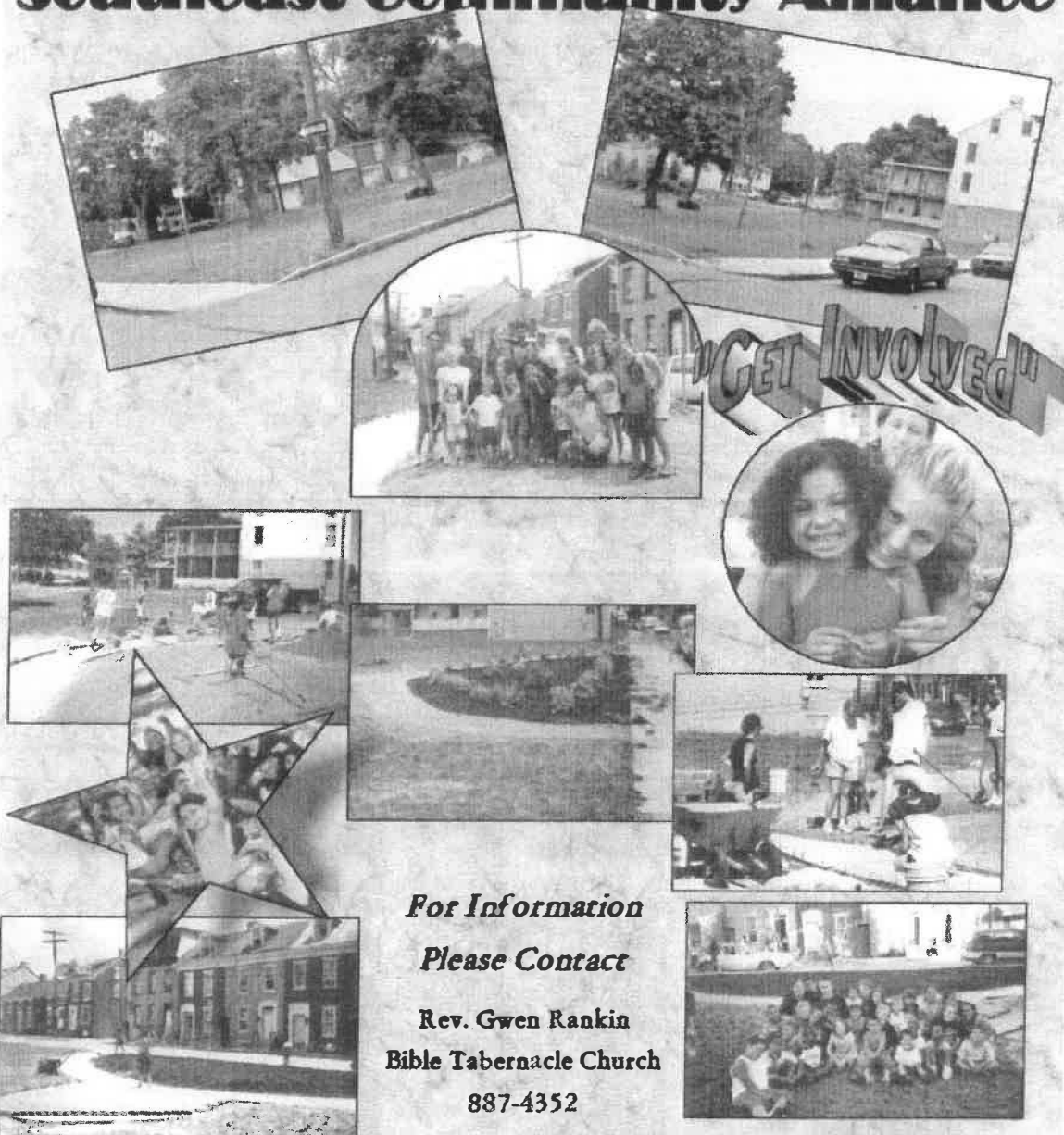
ADVERTISEMENT: BT CHURCH BULLETIN

PHOTOGRAPHS: VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL NEWSPAPER ARTICLE

Maple St. Park

Southeast Community Alliance



*For Information
Please Contact*

Rev. Gwen Rankin
Bible Tabernacle Church
887-4352

Gaye Makrias
Eagle Christian Ministries
846-1060

Rev. Paul Zeigler
J.L. Williams Memorial Church

Daisy Woodard
Small Memorial AME Zion
845-2316



Juno e-mail for gwennear@juno.com printed on Saturday, March 13, 2004, 2:37 PM

From: BabyMaks8@aol.com
To: gwennear@juno.com
Date: Sat, 13 Mar 2004 14:30:32 EST
Subject: Hi Gwen

Hey Gwen—What a blessing it was to work together this morning in the park. God is sooo good.

I should have gotten you this schedule earlier and it slipped my mind but here is a copy of who signed up for when. If you can take care of the BT connection and possibly Daisy for SM that would be great. I will, of course, take care of ECM. Can you possibly check with Daisy or Pastor Ken. If they could get a few more to help from SM that would be a blessing.

I really did think it was great serving together today. I felt like we gave pleasure to the Lord. I enjoy so much getting to know you and other's from your church and SM and I look forward to all of us serving together and knowing each other better as time goes on.

Be blessed as you bless others, Gaye

Sat March 20 10 AM
 Living Word Youth

Sat March 27 10 AM
 Shannon Housman ECM 843-1497
 Pastor Bob ECM
 Carlos & Nilda ECM 699-2256
 Sandy Resh ECM 757-3637
 Jean Pettigrew BT 800-8684

Sat April 3 10 AM
 Jim & June Kester ECM 684-8086
 Carlos & Nilda ECM 699-2256
 Shannon Housman ECM 843-1497
 Jean Pettigrew BT 600-8684
 Lynda Myers BT 854-5596
 Daisy Woodard SM 845-2316

Sat April 10 10 AM
 Jim & June Kester ECM 684-8086
 Carlos & Nilda ECM 699-2256
 Sue Bloom ECM 764-5808
 Jean Pettigrew BT 600-8684
 Daisy Woodard SM 845-2316

Sat April 17 10 AM
 Jim & June Kester ECM 684-8086
 Sandy Resh ECM 757-3637
 Shannon Housman ECM 843-1497
 Dean Ritter ECM 848-4822
 Jean Pettigrew BT 600-8684
 Lynda Myers BT 854-5596
 Daisy Woodard SM 845-2316

Sat April 24 10 AM
 Jim & June Kester ECM 684-8086
 Dean Ritter ECM 848-4822
 Sue Bloom ECM 764-5808
 John & Ann Zellmer ECM 244-4881
 Jean Pettigrew BT 600-8684

Calling ALL Kids !!!

Vacation Bible

School August 2nd thru 6th

Monday to Friday 6 PM to 8 PM



Swimming
Friday, August 6th



We'll meet up
with Eagle
Ministries &
Small
Memorial AM
to experience
Jesus

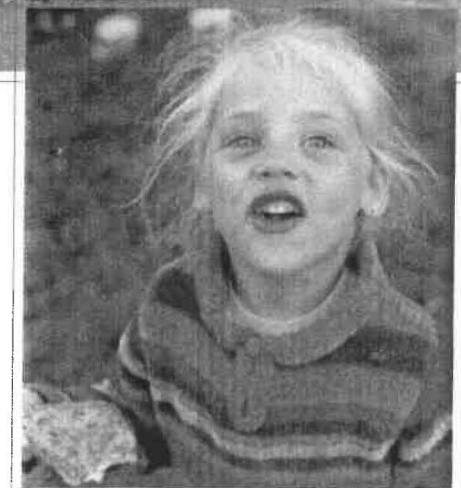
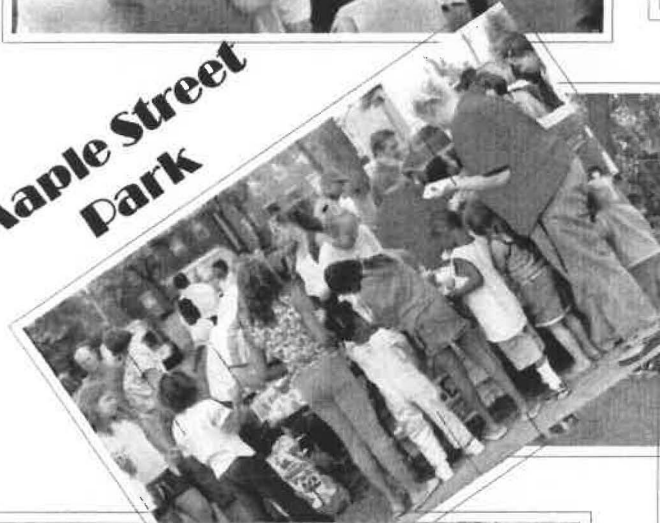


Meet us at
Bible Tabernacle CMA
361 South Pine Street & we will
go to the Maple Street Park

Jana Murray, VBS Director -- Pastor Carl Scott- Bible Tabernacle Church-361 S Pine St-



**Maple Street
Park**



YORK DAILY RECORD ■ FRIDAY, AUGUST 6, 2004

BIBLE SCHOOL IN THE PARK



Emmauel McDowell had already won a prize during a Bible quiz, so he helped his big sister Andrea McDowell with the answer during vacation Bible school Thursday on Maple Street. It was the next to last night for the event organized by Eagle Christian Ministries, Bible Tabernacle Christian and Missionary Alliance Church of York and Small Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church.

Three ministries come together to reach out to city youth.

By SCOT D. CULLEY
For the Daily Record/Sunday News

The Rev. Dean Landis, pastor of Eagle Christian Ministries, held a guitar and spoke clearly into the microphone.

"Let's sing a song about Noah."

Backing up Landis as he sang Thursday night were 12-year-old Austin Tierney on bass, 9-year-old D.J. Myers on drums and Diane Laminon on keyboard in a park along Maple Street.

In front of Landis were about 30 people, most standing up and swaying their arms in time to the music. They ranged in age from toddlers to the middle-aged and were of different races.

Just a few feet from where Landis played, people leaned



Rev. Dean Landis plays a gospel song during vacation Bible school Thursday night, while neighbors listen from the windows.

out the windows and doorways of their homes to listen. Some sat on their stoops. A group of men worked on the engine of a car. Every now and then a car with a loud

stereo would drive by and drown out the music from the park for a moment or two.

After a short skit about the Good Samaritan and a reading of the story, Sunday School teacher Jana Murray held a short quiz for the children to see if they had paid attention.

The first question was on what road did the story take place. A boy raised his hand and said it. "You've got to come up here," Murray said. "And tell me your name, because you're not supposed to talk to strangers."

The youngster, whose name was John, got it right. "All right, John," Murray said. "Woo! Woo! Woo!"

Moments later, a girl named Daisy came up to give the right answer to a question. "This is Daisy," Murray said, "and she don't have a church home. We'll try to fix that tonight."

This was the next to last night for a vacation Bible school.

See BIBLE, page 3D

Bible

Continued from 1D

school, which was organized by an alliance of three groups, the Eagle Christian Ministries, Bible Tabernacle Christian and Missionary Alliance Church of York and Small Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church.

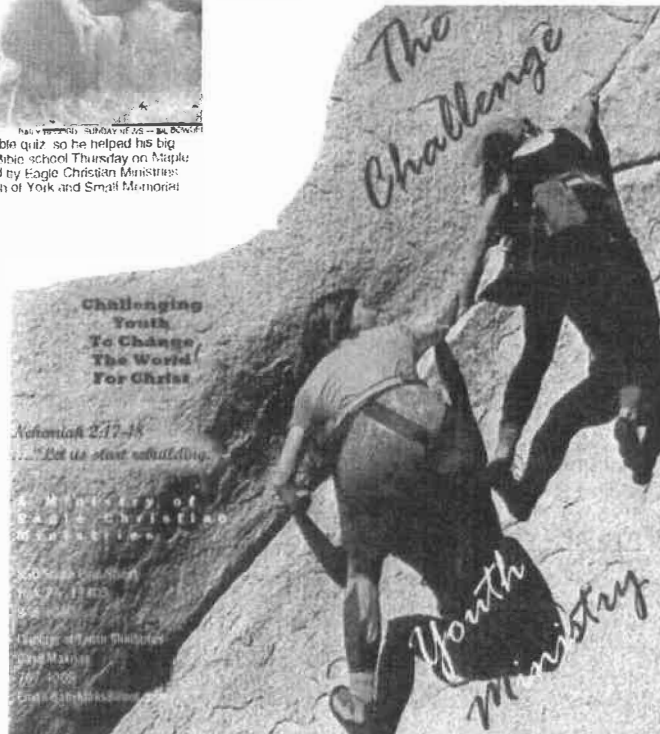
The Rev. Gwendolyn Rankin, associate pastor at Bible Tabernacle and a health teacher at Edgar Fahs Smith Middle School, helped to organize the alliance of the three churches. It's part of her doctoral thesis

called, "Building Alliances: The Transformation of Churches and Communities," through the United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio.

"This is the first big thing we've done together," Rankin said. Future events include a pizza and pool party to wrap up the vacation Bible school tonight, and a cookout and joint service at the new park Saturday. That's when children will be handed book bags with school supplies.

Murray said the alliance is "a vision for all three churches to be fishers of men," she said.

"This is the first year," she said, "but I think we did fantastic."



APPENDIX E
MINISTRY SURVEYS

Date: _____

Ministry Experience: _____

Ministry Survey

1. How was this experience relevant to the "oneness" of Jesus' High Priestly prayer in John 17:21? (...that they may be one in us: that the world may believe that you have sent me.)

2. What do you think was the main point of this experience?

3. How was the point of this experience made clear to you?

4. My feelings about the experience today were (circle one):

Leader presentation:	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor
Interaction with others:	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor
Prayer Time:	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor

5. What in this experience caught your attention or engaged you in a significant way?

6. How did the interactive activities help you to understand the project?

7. How was this experience relevant to you? To the alliance?

8. How were you motivated by this experience to take some action towards community ministry?

Date:

Ministry Experience:

SOUTHEAST COMMUNITY ALLIANCE MINISTRY SURVEY

Please rate your understanding of how you experienced God's presence while participating in this ministry project. Please rank your response on a scale from 1-5. (1=none, 3=somewhat, 5=transforming)

1. This project affected your thoughts about other churches.

1 2 3 4 5

2. The presence of God was reflected in the community.

1 2 3 4 5

3. We have reached out to families outside the church.

1 2 3 4 5

Explanations or comments about any of the above:

APPENDIX F
TRANSCRIBED INTERVIEW

Group Interview: May 27, 2004 at Bible Tabernacle Church sanctuary.

An interviewee who once lived in the area shared this:

“And the Maple Street Project. I couldn’t be more thrilled about that because that’s my old stumping ground. Directly catty-corner from the park, that corner house 30 East Maple Street. that’s where I grew up. I can remember years ago when they started that South George Street Partnership, and they would have people come in and clean up the block and I was one who didn’t go out my house to help. neither did my mom. dad. nor my sisters. The more and more I thought about the few Saturdays I was up there; no one’s coming out. why not? They’re not coming out. Then God brought back to my memory why I didn’t come out. Because we lived there we knew everybody on the block. but what happened was. outsiders came into our block and took over our neighborhood. We didn’t know how to fight back to get our neighborhood back. I mean sure we made police reports. sure the police came out. dispersed the crowd. the crowds would leave, the police would leave and then they would come back. So how did you fight that? And I could remember many mornings when my father had to be to work at 7:00 and he had to say, ‘Excuse me, excuse me! Get off my porch, I need to get out!’ There are people sitting on your porches. You couldn’t get out your house. When it was time to go to school, you would walk out and there are beer bottles, wine bottles and everything right there on your property. What do you do? So I thought about it and said. you know Lord maybe it’s still going on right now, that’s it not so much the people that are actually living there in the neighborhood. that’s doing all the littering and making the loud noise. There could be outsiders still coming in, taking over this first block of East Maple Street. So I’ve just been really praying and praying and praying and asking God. ‘How can I, how can we as a group, reach the neighbors to let them know that we are here for them. we care about them? Because even though there were people who were coming in to clean up our block, they didn’t talk to us, they just came out and did it. And as they were doing it. maybe they didn’t know that they were saying it out loud or maybe their hearts weren’t right because for whatever reason they would say, ‘This is horrible! How could you live here?’

I would never live here. This is bad! This and that. My thought then, well I’m eighteen, nineteen years. it’s like . well you think it’s so bad here. this neighborhood is so trashy. then you clean it up. That wasn’t the right attitude, and so I am more humbled now that God did lay it on my heart to go out there. The first Saturday I did, you just don’t know. I really had to beat myself up to even go out to do it because my mind went back to as a child. as a teenager as a young adult living there. and it’s like. what for? Who really cares? And it’s like God just really spoke to me, ‘I care! You care! You’re my child. That’s your brother and sister still living there in that environment. You go help them. I did and I was really excited! I was so thankful that day there wasn’t a lot of talking, not to me. because I just really wanted to meditate. I had to. I just had to. Okay God you know I’m here, I don’t know about picking up all this trash because I know two hours from now. it’ll be back here. He said. ‘My child. pick it up. Keep going back as often as necessary’. And I did. I went home and told my husband and children about it and they said. ‘Yeah. Whatever’. And I ‘m like. ‘No. you had to be there because I can remember being there, looking out my window seeing someone else cleaning up my neighborhood. The inside of me wanted to go out but I didn’t’. Like I said. the remarks. They thought

we didn't care. I'm saying they thought this but I really didn't know, so it's my perception. But from the conversation, it was like we were the bad people, we didn't care, but we did. Like I said, you had to be there, to actually live there in order to know how it was or even how it is now. So I'm prayerful that we end in prayer and that our conversation is seasoned with love. That they will hear that and they'll come out and say, 'these people, they're here for us. And if we need something, they're here'. And they'll come out and join us. But like I said, I've been there and that was my house. We live there and it took us many years to get my mother and Dad to finally move from there because that was the only home they knew. They didn't want to move but with the neighborhood in the state that it is, they had to. I'm sure with much prayer and God's guidance that section right there could be turned around. It really could because one by one, each family moved away because we could no longer control the neighborhood. We use to run back and forth to the corner store to Sam's grocery. That's all I knew to go across the street to Sam's, give him my nickel and get my candy, being that was safe, and ran back home. So that's passionate to me!"

Another Interviewees response to above comments:

"...It just never occurred to me that inviting them to come and help, there are probably feelings that they have regarding what we are doing, that may be on one hand offensive, even though, the fact that the work that needed to be done was recognized. I think that sometimes we miss the fact that when someone else sees that someone else has to do the work that needed to be done, that something else goes on psychologically. To hear that from someone who lived there will help us to take another look at when we're there, its not just our purpose because it's just about us, even though we're doing something for someone else but we really need to take into consideration the people that live there- what do they need from us? They need more from us then just going in cleaning up the park. I think it would be wonderful as we continue to do that to figure out a way to get them to come over to be involved. I'm not sure how to do that. The children seemed to be more open to do that. That would be my prayer and purpose for what we're doing. I pray that I would have the opportunity to get more involved to see the end result of being there."

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